A TREATISE OF THE Incomparableness of God

In his { BEING, ATTRIBUTES, WORKS and WORD, } opened and applyed.

By *Geo. Swinnocke, M. A.*
Sometime Preacher of the Gospel at great *Kimbell* in the County of *Bucks.*

Vera cognitio Dei, est virtus per quam non modò concipimus esse aliquem Deum, sed etiam tenemus quod de eo scire nostra interest, ut cum recte colamus. Polan. Syntag. Theolog. lib. 9. cap. 7.

Αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ ἵνα γινώσκωσί σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν, καὶ ὃν ἀπέστειλας Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. John. 17 3.

LONDON,
Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst*, and are to be sold at his Shop, at the *Bible* and *Three Crowns*, at the lower end of *Cheap-side*, near *Mercers* Chappel, 1672.

TO THE

WORSHIPFUL

Henry Ashhurst, *Junior*, *Esq*;

And to the

HONOURABLE LADY

Diana Ashhurst

HIS

Religious CONSORT.

Such is the excellency of the Soul of Man, that the very Heathen, whose Souls were almost wholly immerst in grease and sensuality, and serv'd but as Salt, to preserve their Bodies for a time from putrefaction (according to the Opinion of one of the most ingenious

among them) have acknowledged it a Divine Plant, *a drop of the Ocean of Beings, a Ray of a Deity; and the Body but the Case or Cabinet of this Jewel. The dim Rush-light of Nature hath enabled some of them to discern the spirituality, quick, comprehensive, self-reflective motions, and immortality of (their specifical forms as they called) their Souls, and thence to conclude their worth and nobleness: But the clear Sun-light of Scripture advantageth unto a fuller discovery of its excellency. It shews us its Original, that it is of Celestial extraction, created immediately by the Father of Spirits, a beam of the Sun of Righteousness, a bubble of the Fountain of Life, of a much higher descent then the* House of Clay, *and* earthly Tabernacle *the Body,* Gen. 2. 7. Heb. 12. 9. Zach. 12. 1. *It acquaints us with its duration, that it runs parallel with the line of eternity, and swallows up Years and Ages, and Generations, and thousands of thousands, and millions of millions, as small drops and minutes, and nothings in the bottomless Ocean, and endlesness of its abode and continuance. When the Body, like the Sacrifice, falleth to the Earth, and is turned into ashes;*

the

the Soul, like the Flame, aspireth and ascendeth to God, Eccles. 12. 7. Philip. 1. 23. Math. 10. 28. Math. 22. 31, 32. *It manifesteth the Souls capacity, how no Being is excepted from its consideration, all are within its compass and horizon; It can view every with its intellectual Eye. It is not bounded with corporeal Beings, nor limited with material Objects, nor circumscribed with created Essences; but is capable of apprehending the first Cause, the Being of Beings, the Original of all things. It is able not only to retrospect upon its own motions, and to survey the several parts, and ranks, and orders, and rarities, and deficiencies, and excellencies of the Earth, and this sublunary World; but also to ascend to the highest Heavens, and behold the beautiful Face of the blessed God, till it hath lookt it self into the very likeness, and thereby rendred it self fit and meet for his dearest Love, and eternal Embraces.*

The excellency of our Souls doth eminently appear in its receptiveness of the Divine Image: (*Great Princes do not stamp their Image on mean things, as Brass and Pewter, but on the most excellent metals, as Silver and Gold,*) Eph. 4. 23, 24.

Colos. 3. 10. Gen. 1. 26. *And its capableness of* enjoying immediately the blessed God. *To stand before Kings doth both speak and make a person honourable and worthy. God alone is the Fountain of Honour, and the Standard of Excellency; Every Being is his Coin, and he stampeth on it the rate it shall go at. The Holiness and Happiness of the rational Creature consisteth in these two: His Holiness, in conformity to God; his Happiness, in communion with him: And these two have a dependance on each other. They onely who are like him, can enjoy him:* If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and the Truth is not in us, 1 *John* 1. 5. *Holiness, or the Image of God, is not onely an indispensable condition, without which no man shall enjoy God,* Heb. 12. 14. John 3. 3. *But withall an absolutely necessary disposition, without which no man can enjoy God,* Colos. 1. 12. 2 Cor. 5. *And as Conformity disposeth for Communion, so Communion increaseth Conformity; Vision causeth assimulation in Nature,* Gen. 31. 38, 39. *Grace,* 2 Cor. 3. 18. *And glory,* 1 John 3. 2.

Prov. 22. 29. Isa. 43. 5.

Though

Though the motions of the Understanding and Will are in some respect circular, yet the Understanding is the first mover, and the leading faculty, and so the knowledge of the blessed God is both antecedent to, and productive of this Image. Though the knowledge of Creatures puffeth up, polluteth, and so debaseth and destroyeth the Soul, (sinking it the deeper into Hell; as a Vessel laden with Silver and Gold, and the most precious Commodities, when it miscarrieth, sinketh the deeper for its weight and burden,) 1 Cor. 8. 1. Luke 12. 47, 48. *Yet the Knowledge of God is humbling, advancing, purifying and saving,* Job 42. 2 Peter 3. 18. John 17. 3. *The incomparable excellency of the boundless blessed God, is the Subject of this Treatise which I present to you both, as a Testimony of the Honour and Service I owe to you, and of my desire to be instrumental for your spiritual and eternal good. The Subject is the highest imaginable; and though the manner of handling it be plain and ordinary, and infinitely below and unbecoming the Divine Majesty,* (For who can express his noble Acts, or display all his Praise, *Psal.* 108. 2.) *yet the matter of it doth deserve,*

and may prevail for your acceptance of it.

If Knowledge be the excellency of a Man, and differenceth him from a Beast; surely then Divine Knowledge, or the Knowledge of God in Christ, is the excellency of a Christian, and differenceth him from other Men. Our awe of, love to, and trust in the Divine Majesty, are founded in the right knowledge of him. Creatures, the more they are known, the less they are esteemed; but the more the blessed God is known, the more he is prized, desired and obeyed, Psal. 73. 25. Psal. 76. 7. Psal. 90. 11. Psal. 9. 10. Our hatred of Sin, and contempt of the World, proceed from our acquaintance with God: He onely hath hateful thoughts of Sin, and self-loathing apprehensions because of it, who hath seen the great and glorious, the good and gracious God, whose Authority is contemned, whose Law is violated, whose Name is dishonoured, whose Image is defaced, and whose Love is abused by it, Job 42. 6. Isa. 6. 5. He onely lives above this present evil World, and all the Riches, and Honours, and Pleasures thereof; who can look beyond it, to the infinite God, and those unsearchable Riches, and Weights of Glory, and Rivers of Pleasures, that are in and with him.

That

That which was rich and glorious, and pleasant to a Soul before, hath now no worth, no glory, no pleasure, by reason of that wealth, and glory, and pleasure which doth so infinitely exceed it: when the God of Glory appeared to Abraham, *he quickly and quietly left his Country and Kindred, and followed God, not knowing whither he went,* Gen. 12. 1, 2. Acts 7. 3. *If the God of Glory appear to your Souls, you will soon write upon these withering Vanities, broken Cisterns, and gilded Nothings, and count them all but Dung and Dross, for the excellency of the Knowledge of him in Christ.*

You have begun well, go on and persevere in well-doing: I shall give you the same Counsel which the Holy Apostle giveth to those of whom he was perswaded, that they had those things which accompanied Salvation, *Heb.* 6. 9. Take heed least there be in you an evil heart of unbelief, whereby ye should depart away from the living God, *Heb.* 3. 12. Look diligently, least ye should fail of the Grace of God, *Heb* 12. 15. *When false Coin is common abroad, we are the more careful what Money we take; when much false*

Grace

Grace is up and down amongst us, and so many please themselves with their Profession, or spiritual Priviledges, or sacred Performances, or siding with this or that Party, & form of Worship, or the respect and repute they have with others: It concerns you to be the more suspicious of your selves, least you should fail of that Grace of God, which conformeth the Heart to the nature, and the life to the Will and Law of God.

SIR,

† Daughter to the Right Honourable the Lord Paget.

YOu are descended of a worthy, ancient, and religious Family: Your Grand-Father (as I have heard) was eminent for Holiness: Your Father is noted, and honoured, for one that feareth God above many: you have hereby the more encouragement, advantage and engagement to exercise your self to godliness. Tamerlane

MADAM,

YOur Birth is † Honourable, but such Honour without Holiness extends not beyond the Meridian of this World; Grace onely is eternal Glory. That Honour which is woven in the finest Tapestry of earthly Priviledges, will lose colour, and fade away; but the Knowledge

merlane *made it his practice to read often the Heroick Deeds of his Progenitors (not as proud of them, or boasting in them, but) as glorious Patterns, to inflame his Soul with a love of their Vertues. Man is a Creature that is led more by the Eye then the Ear, by Patterns then by Precepts; and no Patterns are more prevalent, then of those whom Nature and Grace oblige us to esteem and affect. These examples, above all others, as flaming Beacons on an Hill, call us to a stout defence of Vertue, when it's invaded by its Enemies.* Alexander *finding one of his Name*

ledge of God is a possession for ever. Nobility by Parents is but Nobility by Parchment, and that is but skin-deep at most, and will wast with time. Godliness alone is that Nobility which no Age can consume, and which will run parallel with the line of eternity.

The whole Earth hath not a pleasanter sight, then Greatness joyn'd with Goodnesse. Greatness it self is venerable, but Goodness joyn'd with it, addeth a new Splendour

and

Name cowardly, charged him to change his Name, or to become valiant. When one of the Scipio's (descended of Scipio Affrican) became dissolute: The Roman Senate order'd him to put off that Ring, which he wore as the Badge of his Noble Family, because, by his vicious Life, he was a Reproach to it. The truth is, a wicked Son of a godly Father (as Uriah) carrieth Letters of his own condemnation about him, causing the Patterns and Precepts of his Family to be Auxiliaries to his own reproach and infamy; whilst the light and lustre of his Ancestors renders and lustre to it; as a sparkling Diamond set in a Gold-Ring, it attracteth the Eyes, and challengeth a greater reverence and respect from all. Evil Greatnesse is a swelling Dropsie, a Disease of the Body Politick, as intolerable a burden as the Earth groanes under; but Grace and Vertue are the more excellent and amiable by the greatnesse of the Person in whom they dwell. It will be your Crown and Credit to prefer God before the World, to

renders his works of darkness the more gross and palpable. I mention not these things, as suspecting your integrity; but to provoke and quicken you to the greater care and circumspection in your carriage and conversation. to esteem Holiness as the onely Beauty, and a Title to the Covenant, as the onely Riches of your immortal Soul.

We have both near and dear Relations, whose Hearts will rejoyce in your perseverance and progress in the wayes of God's Commandements: That you may be helps to each other in the best things, provoke one another to love, and to good Works, live long together on Earth, and for ever together in Heaven, is the prayer

Of your Servant in the Lord,

Geo. Swinnocke.

The

The several

CHAPTERS IN THIS TREATISE.

Chapter 1. *The Preface and Coherence of the Text*, Page 1.

Chap. 2. *God incomparable in his Being*, pag. 11.

Chap. 3. *God incomparable in his Being, as from himself, for himself, and wholly independent on any other*, pag. 17.

Chap. 4. *God incomparable in his Being, as it is absolutely perfect, universal and unchangeable*, pag. 23.

Chap. 5. *God incomparable in his Being, as it is eternal, and without composition*, pag. 33.

Chap. 6. *God incomparable in his Being, as it is infinite and incomprehensible*, pag. 40.

Chap. 7. *God incomparable in his Attributes, his Holiness and Wisdom*, pag. 51.

Chap. 8. *God incomparable in his Attributes,*

butes, in his Knowledge and Faithfulneſs, pag. 76.
Chap. 9. *God incomparable in his Mercy and Patience*, pag. 88.
Chap. 10, *God incomparable in his Attributes, as they are from him, as they are his Eſſence, as they are all one in him, as they are in him in an infinite manner*, pag. 99.
Chap. 11. *God incomparable in his Works, Creation and Providence*, pag. 106.
Chap. 12. *God incomparable in the Work of Redemption; He can do all things*, pag. 124.
Chap. 12. *God incomparable in the manner of his working: He worketh irreſiſtibly, arbitrarily*, pag. 133.
Chap. 13. *God incomparable in his working: He doth it with the greateſt eaſe, and without any help*, pag. 141.
Chap. 14. *God is incomparable in his Word, in its Authority, Condeſcenſion and Efficacy*, pag. 154.
Chap. 15. *God is incomparable in his Word, Purity, Myſteries, Phopheſies*, pag. 165.
Chap. 16. *God incomparable in his Word, as it is converting, affrighting and comforting*, pag. 174. Chap.

Chap. 17. *How great is the malignity of Sin, which contemneth, dishonoureth and opposeth this God*, pag. 182.

Chap. 19. *Shewing how great is the madness and misery of impenitent Sinners*, pag. 193.

Chap. 21. *How monstrous is their Pride, who compare themselves with the incomparable God*, pag. 209.

Chap. 22. *Incomparable Worship and Service due to God*, pag. 217.

Chap. 23. *Motives to acquaintance with the incomparable God, the knowledge of whom is sanctifying, satisfying and saving*, pag. 237.

Chap. 24. *Means of acquaintance with God; a sense of our ignorance; attendance on the Word, fervent Prayer.*

Chap. 25. *Exhort to choose God for our Portion.*

Chap. 26. *Give God the glory of his incomparable Excellency, with some Considerations to enforce it.*

Chap. 27. *Comforts to those that have this incomparable God for their Portion.*

CHAP.

PSALM 89. 6.

For who in the Heavens can be compared to the Lord? who among the Sons of the Mighty can be likened to the Lord.

CHAP. I.

The Preface and meaning of the Text.

IT is certain, that our happiness in the other World will consist in part in our perfect knowledge of the blessed and boundless God: When we shall *know him as we are known of him*, we shall be blessed as he is blessed; and when *we shall see him as he is, we shall be like him* in purity and felicity; we shall be fully satisfied with his likeness and his love. Rich must be the de-

light which the most large and noble faculty of man his understanding shall receive, in its intimate acquaintance with, and clear & full apprehension of the highest Truth. And it is as certain, that our holiness in this World doth not a little depend upon our knowledge of him, whose *Name alone is excellent*. None wander from him, prefer the Flesh and World before him, and in their whole lives walk contrary to him; but from their ignorance of him. *They are estranged from the life of God* (i. e. a spiritual heavenly conversation) *through the ignorance that is in them, because of the* Eph. 4.18. *blindness of their Hearts*. Dark corners of an House are filled with Dust, dark Cellars with Vermine, and dark Hearts with cursed Lusts: None are enlarged in desires after God, or ravished with delight in God, or can cast their Souls and all their Concerns on God; but those that are acquainted with him. They who know his beauty and bounty, cannot but love him, and they who know his power and faithfulness, cannot but trust him: *They who know thy Name, will put their trust in thee*, Psal. 9. 10. Whence comes it to pass, that Believers can trample on the

Riches

Riches and Treasures, and Wealth of this beggarly World, that they *can lay* their white and yellow Earth, their Silver and Gold *at the Apostles Feet*, that they can *suffer the spoiling of their Goods* (not onely patiently, but) *joyfully*; but from the knowledge of him who is true riches, *Luke* 16. 11. Substance, *Prov.* 8. 21. an enduring Substance, *Job* 10. 34. A bottomless Mine of unsearchable Riches, *Eph.* 3.8. Whence is it that they can refuse to be called the Sons of Kings Daughters, that they can contemn Honours and Preferments, spurn Crowns and Scepters under their Feet, but from the knowledge of him who is their Crown of Glory, their Diadem of Renown, and the praise of all his Saints, *Heb.* 11. 24, 25. That which to the sensual Worldling is so glorious, hath no glory in the Believers Eye, by reason of the Lord of Glory, who doth so infinitely excel. Whence is it, that they can *hate Father, Mother, Wife, Child, Liberty*; yea, *Life* it self, and leave all at the Call and Command of their Maker, but from the knowledge of him who is (as *Elkanah* said to *Hannah*) better to them then ten Sons, then all Relations, then the whole Crea- Heb. 10. 34.

Creation. Those *Stars* vanish and disappear, when once this *Sun of Righteousness ariseth*: How quickly, how quietly, without any hesitancy or reluctancy, will *Abraham* leave his Country and Kindred, and Fathers House, when once *the God of Glory appeareth to him*, Acts 9. 2, 3, 4. In a word, whence is it, that they *escape the pollutions of the World* (in which others are mired, drown'd and destroyed,) *but through the knowledge of God.* 2 Pet. 2. 20. Well may our Lord Jesus say, *It is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* To know God affectionately, as our chiefest good, so as to give him our superlative esteem, and intensest love, is *spiritual life* here, in the habit or principle, as also in the act and exercise of it; and it is the beginning seed, preparation & way of our *eternal life* hereafter. But who can know that being which infinitely passeth all knowledge: He that would know God fully, must be God himself; and he who would tell you what God is in any measure answerable to his excellency, had need *to know him as he is known of him.* And supposing I were able to speak of the perfection of God, as one that, like the great Apo-

stle,

ſtle, had been caught up *into the third Heavens*: I queſtion whether, if I had a Tongue to ſpeak of him after that manner, ye had Ears to hear of him, or Hearts to underſtand what I ſhould ſpeak. But though I am not able to ſpeak, nor you to hear of God, according to his perfection, yet through the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt ſo much may be ſpoken and heard of him, as may tend to our preſent Sanctification and future Salvation. Though we cannot *ſee him as he is*, yet we may ſee him *as he is not*; though the height of his being be above the reach of our Underſtandings, we may get ſome-what nearer to him (and indeed we have no other way while we are here then) by climbing upon the ſhoulders of all created excellencies, and there proclaiming, *That none in the Heavens is to be compared to the Lord, that none among the Sons of the Mighty is like unto the Lord.*

In the words, the *Pſalmiſt* compareth God with, and prefereth God before the higheſt, the greateſt in Heaven and Earth.

In the words we have a Compariſon and a Prælation.

1. A *Compariſon*, and this is between God and thoſe that are moſt excellent in

Heaven, and the mightiest on Earth.

2. A *Prælation*, or preferring God before whatsoever is excellent in Heaven or Earth: The Interrogation is a strong negation, as is frequent in Scripture, *Prov.* 20. 9. *Who can say I have made my Heart clean, I am pure from my Sin*; i. e. None can say I have made my Heart clean, or am pure from my Sin. So Exod. 15. 11. *Who is like to thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders*; that is, None is like Thee among the gods, none is so glorious in Holiness, so fearful in Praises, such a wonder-working God as thou art. Thus the *Psalmist* understandeth the Text, For *who in the Heavens is to be compared to the Lord? Who among the Sons of the Mighty can be likened to the Lord*; i. e. None in the Heavens, none among the Sons of the Mighty on Earth is comparable to *Jehovah*.

The interpretation of the words.

I shall first give you the meaning of the words, and then lay down the Doctrine, which will be the foundation of my Discourse on the Subject.

For this causal Particle gives the reason why Saints and Angels should joyn together

ther in the praise of God. *The Heavens shall praise thy Wonders, O Lord, thy faithfulness also in the Congregation of the Saints: For who in the Heavens is to be compared to the Lord.* By the Heavens *Calvin* understandeth the holy Angels, who rejoyce in the Churches welfare, and bless God for preserving his People, and performing his Promises to them; and 'tis apparent by the Apostle, that Angels are present in the Congregation of the Saints, 1 *Cor.* 11. 11. And so this Text addeth another Ground for their admiration of the great God, *viz.* his incomparable excellency. His high and matchless Perfections, call for high and matchless Praises. Others take the Text as a ground for the confirmation of the *Psalmists* Faith in the Covenant God had made with him, mentioned *Verse* 3, 4. namely, God's Superiority over Angels in Heaven, and Men on Earth; therefore they cannot hinder him in the accomplishment of his Word, being infinitely inferior to him. Verse 5.

Who in the Heavens? Who in the *Skie? Ainsworth* reads it. In the *Clouds (in Nubibus æquabitur)*, is to be equal'd (saith *Calvin*) to *Jehovah*, *Quis enim in superiore*

nube par æstimetur Jehova. Who in the higher Clouds is equal to *Jehovah*, so *Tremell.* reads it.

Who in the Heavens? i. e. say some, in the Starry-Heavens, among the Cœlestial Bodies, Sun, Moon or Stars; which were adored as gods, not onely by the *Persians*, but also by some Idolatrous *Jews*, because of their brightness and beauty, their lustre and glory. Which of all those famous Lamps, and heavenly Luminaries, is to be compared to the *Father of Lights*, and *Sun of Righteousness?* They may glister like Glowormes in the Night of Paganisme, among them who are covered with the Mantle of Darkness; but when this Sun ariseth, and day appeareth, they all vanish and disappear.

Who in the Heavens? i. e. say others, in the Heaven of Heavens, the highest, the third Heavens, among the Cœlestial Spirits, *Cherubims* and *Seraphims*, *Angels* and *Arch-Angels*, *Principalities* and *Powers*, *Thrones* and *Dominions?* Who among the innumerable company of Angels? who among those pure, those perfect Spirits (who are the ancientest, the honourablest House of the Creation) is to be compared to the Father of Spirits? Though

Though Angels are glorious Creatures considered simply, and in themselves, in respect of their Power, Wisdome, Purity and Beauty; yet if they be considered comparatively with the blessed God, I may say of them as the Apostle doth of the Jewish Worship (which was glorious, by reason of its Divine Institution,) in comparison with the Christian Worship, 2 *Cor.* 3. 10.) *Even that which was glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the Glory that excelleth.*

Is to be compared to *Jehovah?* Is to be likened to *Jehovah?* Is to be equal'd to *Jehovah?* Is to be put in the Scales, and worthy to be weighed with *Jehovah*, that Being of Beings, that God of Gods.

To Jehovah? This name *Jehovah* is the chief and most proper name of God: It is derived from *Haiah fuit*, and signifieth that Being which was, is, and is to come; which is alwayes the same, and the cause of all other Beings, *Rev.* 1. 4, 8. *Psal.* 102. 28. *Acts* 17. 28. and which gives a being to his Word and Promises. In Heaven there is among glorious Angels no such Being.

Who

Who amongſt the Sons of the Mighty? Inter filios fortium, Who among the Sons of the *ſtrong*, *Jun.* reads it. Among the Sons of the Gods, ſaith *Calvin*, ſo the Seventy read it, and underſtand (with the *Chaldee* Paraphraſe) Angels, who are called Sons of God, *Job* 1. 6. and *Job* 38. 7. But we having underſtood Angels, the beſt and higheſt in Heaven, by the firſt interrogation, *Who in the Heavens is to be compared to the Lord?* It may be moſt convenient to underſtand in this place, by *Sons of the Mighty*, the beſt and higheſt on Earth, the greateſt and moſt gracious Princes and Potentates, who are higher by head and ſhoulders then others. Theſe are called *Gods*, and *Sons of the moſt High*, or Almighty, *Pſal.* 82. 6. And hereby the Prophet challengeth both Worlds, Heaven and Earth, to bring forth any that may equal or compare with *Jehovah*.

Can be likened to the Lord? Is ſuch a Being as he is, can ſpeak or act as he doth, is in any reſpect worthy to be named with him.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

God is incomparable; in his Being.

THE Doctrine which I shall raise out of the words, is this, That God is incomparable; Or, there is none among the highest, the holiest, in Heaven or Earth like unto *Jehovah*. Take the greatest, the most excellent of Beings in this or the other World, yet they come infinitely short of this Being of Beings; *Psal.* 86. 8. *Among the gods, there is none like unto thee, O Lord*; Mark, the Psalmist doth not choose a weak Adversary for God to contend with and conquer, but the strongest. He doth not compare God with the meanest and lowest, but even with the highest, and prefers God before them. *Among the gods, there is none like unto thee, O Lord.*

1. Among those that are Gods by *unjust usurpation*, as *evil Angels* are, who are called *The Princes of the Powers of the Air*, Eph. 2. 2. And the gods of this World, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. Or, as Antichrist, *who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped; So that he as God sitteth in the Temple*

Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, 2 Thess. 2. 4. Among these, there is none like unto thee, O Lord. These unclean Beasts are unworthy to be mentioned with the High, the holy God.

2. Among those that are gods by mens *erroneous Perswasions* and Opinions, as Idols, and those Deities which the Heathen worship; There is none like to thee, O Lord. *Their Idols are Silver and Gold, the Work of mens hands: They have Mouths, but they speak not, Eyes have they, but they see not. They have Ears, but they hear not; Noses have they, but they smell not: They have Hands, but they handle not; Feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their Throat*, Psal. 115. 4, 5, 6, 7. Idols are the work of the Creatures, and their Makers are infinitely below the Creator; therefore they themselves are much more. *We know that an Idol is nothing in the World, and that there is none other God but one*, 1 Cor. 8. 4. Though an Idol be somewhat materially, yet it's nothing formally, as to the intent or purpose for which it is worshipped.

3. Among

3. Among those that are gods by *Divine Ordination*, as Angels, *Psal.* 8. 5. Magistrates, *Psal.* 82. 66. (who have the Image of a Deity stamped on them, in their Authority and Dominion over others,) none is to be compared to *Jehovah*. These are gods by derivation, by deputation; as subordinate Magistrates are commissionated by the Supreme, and have a Beam of his Power communicated to them, but still remain weak Creatures, limited by his Precepts, and liable to his Judgment. So Angels and Kings have some impressions of a Deity on them; but their Power is derivative from God, and limited by his will; yea, their *Essence* is from him, their Subsistence is by him, and their Dependance is every moment upon him. Hence he is called the most high, *Psal.* 92. 1. *O thou most high.* Kings and Princes are *high*, Angels and Arch-angels are *higher*; but *Jehovah* onely is the *most high*, *Eccles.* 5. 8. He that is higher then the highest considereth.

Minuisti illum paululum à deo. Calvin.

For the explication of this Doctrine, the truth of it will be evident, if we consider the true God, and compare him with the highest, and most excellent in Heaven and Earth.

1. In

1. In his Being.
2. In his Attributes.
3. In his Works.
4. In his Word.

1. God is incomparable in his *Being*: God hath not onely a Being, but an excellency in his Being; therefore he is called, *His Excellency: Should not his Excellency make you afraid*, Job 13. 11. And he is said alone to be Excellent, *Thy Name alone is Excellent*, Psal. 148. 13.

By Name, is meant sometimes any thing whereby God makes himself known, *Exod.* 20. 7. But here the Being of God, or God himself, as Prov. 18. 10. *The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower*; *i. e.* God himself is a strong Tower, Psal. 76. 1. *His Name is great in* Israel; *i. e.* The Being of the great God is magnified in his Church, or among his Chosen. Now his Being alone is excellent, because there is no such Being as his: There is no Being excellent besides his, because there is no Being excellent like his. He is excellent in all, above all, and beyond all.

His Being is such a Being, that he alone *is*, and all besides are *non entities*, and no Beings in comparison of him. His Name speaks

ſpeaks the incomparable nature of his Being. *And God ſaid unto* Moſes, *Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the Children of* Iſrael *I am hath ſent thee. I am*, I a Being that really is, beſide whom there is none hath ſent thee: What Prince, what Potentate can ſay *I am?* What Angel, what Arch-Angel can ſay *I am?* No, this is the proper name of *Jehovah.*

Therefore when he promiſeth himſelf to be the Reward of his People, he doth promiſe himſelf under the Notion of *Eſſence, Being, Subſtance,* in oppoſition to all others which are but Shadows and Nothings to him; Prov. 2.7. *He layeth up ſound Wiſdom* (Hebr. *eſſentiam Eſſence*) *for the Righteous.* Prov. 8. 21. *I will cauſe them that love me, to inherit Subſtance.* *Junius* reads it, *Ut poſſide ant id quod eſt*, I will cauſe them that love me to poſſeſs that *which is.* God *is*, and all other Beings are *not* in comparilon of him, Dan. 4. 35. *All the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as Nothing.* God *is*, and all others are *Nothing*; yea, if it were poſſible to apprehend it, *leſs then Nothing.* It's a notable expreſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, to ſet forth the excellency of Gods Being; and the pitifulneſs, meanneſs, and nothingneſs of all

all other Beings, Isa. 40. 15, 16, 17. *Behold!* (a note of Attention and Admiration) *the Nations* (the *Chaldeans* that are our Lords and Masters, or all Nations of the World, be they never so high, great, strong, or glorious) *are as the drop of a Bucket*, (which falleth from the Bucket, or hangeth on it, when the water is powred out, yet diminisheth not the measure) *and the small dust of the Ballance*, (which cleaveth to the Scales, when the Spice is put out, yet altereth not the weight, it is so little). *Behold!* (wonder, be amazed at it,) *he taketh up the Isles* (the great, large, vast Islands of the World) *as a very little thing*, (as poor small inconsiderable things:) *All Nations before him are as nothing.* (Not onely the great Islands, but also the Continents, with the several innumerable Creatures in them, are not onely little to this God, but as nothing, as no Being to his Being,) *and they are counted to him less then Nothing and Vanity*; (Put them in the Scales with God, and they are not only leight, and without any weight, Nothing at all; but if Men were capable of concieving any thing less then nothing, such were all the World to God,) Though the World be absolutely somewhat,

what, yea very great; yet comparatively to God, it's nothing, leſs then Nothing and Vanity.

CHAP. III.

The incomparableneſs of God in his Being. It is from its ſelf, for its ſelf, and wholly independent.

THe incomparableneſs of the Divine Being, will appear in ſeveral particulars.

1. His Being is *from himſelf*; No Being in the World, beſide his, is its own Cauſe or Original: Angels, Men, the higheſt, yea the loweſt Creatures, are derivative Beings: They have what they are from another, even from God; They are drops that flow from the Ocean of all Beings; they are Rays, derived from the Sun, the Fountain of Light and Entity. The Apoſtle tells us, That Men are beholden to God for their Beings, Acts 17. 28. *In him we have our Beings.* They were nothing till he ſpake them into ſomething: He formed and faſhioned their Bodies, *Pſal.* 139.

13, 14, 15. He created and infused their Souls; He put that Heaven-born Inhabitant into the House of Clay, *Gen.*2.7. *Job* 10. 11, 12. The whole visible World is his Workmanship, *Acts* 17. 24. God that made the World, and all things therein; The invisible World are also the effects of his powerful word: Angels as well as Men may thank him for what they are. The greatest Angel is as much bound to him for his Being, as the smallest Atome, *Colos.* 1. 16. *For by him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible; whether they be Thrones or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers.* But God is beholden to none for his Being: He was when none else was, even from eternity, *Psal.* 90. 1. Therefore none could contribute the least to his Being: *I am* Jehovah, *and there is none else beside me*, Isa. 45. 5, 6. I am he that giveth a being to himself, that am what I am from my self, and of my self; and there is no such Being beside me.

2. God is Being, that is, *for himself*; as he is his own first Cause, so he is his own *last end*; as he is wholly from himself, so he is wholly for himself. All other Beings are not for themselves, but for another.

All

All things were created by him and for him, Coloss. 1. 16. Since all are from God, it is but reason that all should be for God: The Rivers that run from the Sea, return to the Sea again, owning and acknowledging their Original, *Eccles.* 1. 7. Good Men are for God. *None of us liveth to himself, or dyeth to himself; but whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we dye, we dye unto the Lord; and whether we live or dye, we are the Lords*, Rom. 14. 7. Good Angels are for God, for his glory, *Isa.* 6. 3. Evil Men, evil Angels are for God, though not in their intentions and purposes, yet in his intention, and by his wise powerful Government of them, and their practices; Prov. 16. 4. *The Lord made all things for himself, even the Wicked for the day of Slaughter.* Good Beings are for him intentionally, and evil Beings are for him eventually. Nay, all Beings are for him: *Of him, and through him, and for him are all things*, Rom. 11. 36. But God is altogether for himself, as his highest end, and not for any others. He is his own end, as well as his own beginning; who never had a beginning, nor shall ever have an end, *Revel.* 1. 8. As all God doth is for himself, Revel. 4. 11. *Thou hast created*

ted all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. So all God is is for himself: He is infinite, wise, almighty, everlasting, unchangeable, holy, righteous, faithful Being, is for himself. It is the prophaneness of some Men to be somewhat for God; more for the World, and most of all for their carnal selves: But it is the perfection of God, to be somewhat for the World in general; more for his Elect in special, and most of all for Himself; Nay, in all that he is for the World, or his Elect, he is still most for himself. It is the excellency and purity of Saints and Angels to be what they are, and to do what they do for God, to make him who is the efficient, the final Cause of their Beings and Actions. But 'tis the excellency and purity of God, to be what he is, and to do what he doth for himself: He who is his own happiness, must be his own end.

3. His Being is an *independent* Being: He is by himself, as well as from and for himself; None ever in Heaven or Earth contributed the least towards the maintenance or continuance of his Being; Neither the Creatures goodness, nor their Goods do him the least good. Not their *goodness*; Men may

may be advantaged by the goodneſs of Men, but God cannot: *My goodneſs extendeth not to thee, but to the Saints that are on Earth*, Pſal. 16. 3. Not their *Goods*, He is the Lord Proprietor of the whole world, and if he wanted any thing, he would not ask the leave of any; for all is his own, but he is above all want: *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the World is mine, and the fulneſs thereof*, Pſal. 50. 12. *i.e.* I declare to the World, That I am uncapable of the leaſt want; or if I needed a Meals-Meat, I would ſcorn to go to the Creatures Door to beg it: I could ſupply my ſelf out of my own Store, if there were need, but there is no need at all. He challengeth all the World, to produce any Being that ever obliged or ingaged him in the leaſt: *Who hath prevented me, that I may repay him*, Job 41. 11. Where is the Man, where is the Angel, where is the Creature that can ſay, He ever did me the leaſt kindneſs, that hath been before-hand with me in courteſie, to whom I am the leaſt in debt for my ſubſiſtance? I am here ready to make him amends: *Who hath prevented me, that I may repay him?*

But all other Beings are dependent, the higheſt, the ſtrongeſt of them are not able to bear their own weight; but like the Hop or Ivy, muſt have ſomewhat to lean upon: *By him all things ſubſiſt*, Coloſſ. 1. 17. He preſerveth them in their Beings, and in their Motions; *In him we live and move, and have our Beings*, Acts 17. 28. As the Beams depend on the Sun, and the Streams on the Fountain; ſo do the Creatures for their beings and actions depend on God. *He upholdeth all things* (as the Foundation the Building) *by the word of his Power*, Hebr. 1. 3. He is the Atlas, that bears up the whole World, without whom it would fall to nothing. Thou preſerveſt Man and Beaſt, *Pſal.* 36. 6. *Dependentia eſt de eſſentia Creaturæ.*

God is to the World, as the Soul to the Body; He animates and actuates every thing in it, and enableth his ſeveral Creatures to all their motions. Men are apt to think that Fire can burn of it ſelf, it being ſo natural to the Fire to burn; yet if God do but ſuſpend his influence (*actum ſecundum*, as they ſpeak) a Furnace heated ſeven times hotter then uſual, burns no more then Water, *Dan.* 3. 27. We are ready to

to conceive, that it's eaſie for a Man to ſee, when the Organ is rightly diſpoſed; there is a fit *medium*, and a due diſtance of the Organ from the Object: But yet if God deny his concurrence, though there are theſe three Requiſites to ſight, a man can ſee no more then if he were ſtark blind, *Gen.* 19. 11. 2 *Kings* 6. 18.

Angels themſelves muſt have their Maker for their mover; or as active Spirits as they are, they muſt ſtand ſtill.

CHAP. IV.

God incomparable in his Being, as he is abſolutely perfect, univerſal, unchangeable.

HE is an *abſolutely perfect* Being: There is a two-fold perfection competible to Beings; Some are perfect *in their kind*, that is, have all things requiſite to that Species of which they are. So we ſay the World is perfect, becauſe it hath all things needful to a World. A man is a perfect man, that hath a Body with all its parts and members, and a Soul with all its powers 4.

and faculties: But ſecondly, A Being is *abſolutely* perfect, when nothing can be added to it, or taken from it, when it is uncapable of the leaſt Acceſſion or Diminution. Now ſuch a Being is God, and none but God. As the Sun gets nothing by the ſhining of the Moon and the Stars, neither loſeth any thing by their Eclipſes, or withdrawing. So the ſelf ſufficient God gains nothing by all the Suits and Services, Prayers and Praiſes of his Creatures; neither looſeth any thing by their neglect of their Duties. He is above the influence of all our performances; our holineſs addeth not the leaſt to his Happineſs. *Can a Man be profitable to God, as he that is wiſe may be profitable to himſelf? Is it any pleaſure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him that thou makeſt thy wayes perfect?* Job 22. 2, 3. He is beyond the malice of Sin: As Holineſs doth not help him, ſo the Sin of his Creatures doth not hurt him. All thoſe Darts of Sin which the Wicked ſhoot up againſt Heaven, fall ſhort, and fall down upon their own Heads. *If thou ſinneſt, what doſt thou againſt him? or if thy Tranſgreſſions be multiplyed, what doſt thou unto him?*

If

If thou be righteous, what giveſt thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy Wickedneſs may hurt a Man, as thou art, and thy Righteouſneſs may profit the Sons of Men, Job 35. 6.7,8. Fleſh and Blood may be injured and pierced by the Weapons of unrighteouſneſs; but not the Rock of Ages, that is impenetrable. They who are of the ſame make and mold with our ſelves, may be advantaged by our Bleſſings and Praiſes, but not he who is above all Bleſſing and Praiſes.

What doth the great Light of the World get by the *Perſians* admiration and adoration of it. What is a Fountain the better, if Men drink of its water, and commend it; or the worſe, if Men paſs by, and deſpiſe it. What would God get, if he ſhould make millions of Worlds to laud and magnifie him; or what would God looſe, if there were no World, no Creature at all? *Who hath given to him, and it ſhall be recompenced again?* Rom. 11, 35. He hath given to all what-ever they are, or have; but none ever gave to him. They who give to him their Love, and Fear, and Truſt, and Names, and Eſtates, give nothing to him. We can give nothing to him, to whom we owe all: Beſides,

sides, all we have, and are, and do, and suffer for him, addeth nothing to him. His *declarative* glory may, but his *essential* glory, or glorious essence admits not in the least of any increase or decrease. But no other Being is absolutely perfect; Men are exceeding imperfect, since their Falls: They are so far from being above all additions, that they stand in continual need of Additions. They need the Air to breath in, the Earth to bear them, Food to strengthen them, Rayment to cover them, Fire to warm them, Sleep to refresh them; They want Righteousness to justifie them, the Holy Ghost to sanctifie them, Love to comfort them, and Mercy to save them. Man is an heap of Infirmities, an Hospital of Diseases, and a bundle of Imperfections: He is so far from being absolutely perfect, that (in a moral consideration) since his Apostacy, he is not perfect in his kind. And though Angels are more perfect then Men, yet they are imperfect to God: Angels, 'tis true, are perfect in their kind, but not perfect in all kinds; something may be added to them, something may be taken from them. The highest Angel may be higher, and the holiest Angel

gel may be holier, and the best of them may be better. Though the Stars differ from each other in brightness and glory, yet none of them is a Sun: Though Angels differ from Men, and each from others in honour and excellency; yet none of them is a god, none of them is absolutely perfect.

5. God is an *universal* Being, he hath all good eminently and virtually in himself: Whatsoever excellencies are scattered and dispersed among the Creatures in Heaven or in Earth, they are all united in, and centered after an infinite manner in the Creator. It's a true Rule in Philosophy, *Quod efficit tale est magis tale*; Whatsoever good is in the effect, is more abundantly in the cause: Now God being the principle and cause of all the good and excellency that is in every Creature, it must of necessity be more abundantly in him. As some Potions have the quintessence of many Herbs, many Drugs in them; so God hath the quintessence of all Creatures, and infinitely more in him.

For this cause he is called by, and compared to whatsoever is good and answerable, either to necessity, conveniency or delight.

delight. Sometimes to that good which is *neceſſary*, as to *life*, *John* 1. 4. To the *Fountain of life*, Pſal. 36. 9. To *Light*, John 1. 9. To the *Father of Lights*, James 1. 17. To Food, as to *Bread*, yea, *living Bread*, John 6. 51. To *water*, yea *living water*, John 4. 10. To *Reſt*, *Return to thy Reſt, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*, Pſal. 116. 7. He is the onely Ark, wherein alone the Dove wearied about the waters of this World, can find reſt: Sometimes he is compared to that good which is *convenient*, as to an *Habitation*, Pſal. 90. 9, 10. *O Lord, thou haſt been our dwelling-place from all Generations.* To Health, *Pſal.* 42. *ult.* To Peace, 2 *Cor.* 13. 11. To Protection or Defence, as a *Shield*, which defends the Body from the ſhot or thruſts of men, *Gen.* 15. 1. To a *Wall of Fire*, which defends the Traveller from the fury of Beaſts, *Zechar.* 2. 5. To a *Refuge*, which ſecures the Army, when 'tis foy'ld by the Enemy, *Pſal.* 57. 1. To a *Rock*, a *Fortreſs*, *an high Tower*, Pſal. 18. 2. Sometimes he is compared to that good which is *delightful*. As to *Riches*, Job 22. 24, 25. To *unſearchable Riches*, Eph. 3. 8. *Durable Riches*, Prov. 8. 18. To Honour and

and Glory, as a *Royal Diadem*: He is called a glorious Lord, *Isa.* 33. 21. Said to be the *Glory in the midst of his People*, Zach. 2. 5. To joy and pleasure, *Psal.* 43. 4. To Relations, he is a Father, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. An Husband, *Hos.* 2. 19. To a *Feast of fat things, of Marrow and Fatness, of Wine, of Wine on the Lees well refined*, Isa. 25. 6. Which are the delight of the Pallat. To *Beauty*, which is the delight of the Eyes, *Cantic.* 5. 10. *& ult.* To *sweet Smells*, which are the delight of the Nostrils, *Cantic.* 4. 10. *Cantic.* 1. 3. To the most *harmonious Musick*, which is the delight of the Ears: *His mouth is most sweet, or sweetnesses*, Cantic. 5. 16. *My Soul failed when he spake*, so ravishing was his Voyce, *Cantic.* 5. 6. To *Truth*, which is the delight of the Understanding, *Psal.* 31. 5. *John* 14. 6. To *Good*, which is the delight of the Will, *Math.* 19. 17. Thus God is not one good, but all good: The truth is, all the good, all the excellencies that are in Men or Angels, are not worthy to be a shadow, or foyl to set off those excellencies that are in God. All good is in one God, *Mark* 10. 29, 30. But Creatures are but particular Beings: Man is but a particular Being

ing, a low limited Being. What is *Man, that is a Worm; or the Son of Man that is a Worm*, Job 25. 6. There is some good in one man, and some good in another man; but not all good in any man, no, not in all men. Angels are but particular Beings, little Beings: One Angel is one drop, another Angel another drop, a third Angel a third drop; every one is but a drop: None of them is an Ocean, as God is, which containeth all those drops, and infinitely more.

6. God is an *unchangeable* Being, not only without, but uncapable of the least alteration. He is the *same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever*, Heb. 13. 8. He is what he was, and what he will be eternally. He is the same since the World was made, that he was before the World, and that he will be when this World shall be no more: *With him is not the least variation, or shadow of turning*, James 1. 17. No παραλλαγὴ, or variableness: It is an Astronomical word, taken from the heavenly Bodies, which suffer many Declensions and Revolutions, which they call *Parallaxes*. Though those heavenly Lights are variable, have their increases and decreases; their times

of

of rising and setting; yet our Father of Lights is not variable: He knoweth no rising or setting, no increasing or decreasing; but shineth always with the same light and *lustre*, with the same beauty and brightnesse. Nor shadow of Turning; τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα. The lesser Luminaries, or Stars, according to their different Postures, have divers shadowings, or obumbrations, according to their nearnesse to, or distance from the Sun, their shadows are greater or lesser; but our Sun is still the same, knoweth no clouding, no shadowing, no eclipsing. When God hates those Angels as Apostates, whom first he loved, as created pure and holy, he is still the same; the change is not in God, but in them. Bring Clay to the Sun, it hardens it; bring Wax to the Sun, with the same influence, it softens it, without any alteration in the Sun: When God punisheth a Man that is wicked, and prospereth the same Man, becoming a Penitent, he is still the same. If a man walk on one side of a Church, the Pillars are on his left hand, if on the other side, on his right hand: The Pillars remain where they were, the motion or change is in the Man.

But

But Creatures are all mutable; the Heavens seem constant, but it is in inconstancy; their perpetual motion speaks their perpetual alteration: Psal. 102. 26, 27. *They shall perish, but thou shalt endure, they shall wax old as a Garment,* (that is, wearing out, and wasting every day); *as a Vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed, but thou Lord art the same for ever.* The old Heavens will pass away, and new ones succeed in their room at the general Conflagration, but the God of Heaven will never pass away. Man is ever in motion, from one condition to another: His Body changeth in its age, constitution, temper, at last into rottenness, dust and corruption: *I have said to Corruption, thou art my Father, and to the Worme, ye are my Brother and Sister,* Job 17.14. His Soul changeth in its passions, affections, love hatred, delights, desires: His whole man changeth in its place, company, carriage, conversation: He hath no consistency while he is, he continueth not what he was, *Job* 14. 2, 3. Angels are changeable, even the good Angels, though not as Men, yet as Creatures; as perfect as they are, they have this imperfection, 1. They are

who

who once were not, and (in regard of themselves) have a possibility not to be. 2. Angels may loose what they have, and attain what they have not. 3. Angels are mutable in regard of place, sometimes in Heaven, sometimes on Earth. What little unchangableness is in Angels, is derivative, God is the original of it; their immutability at most is but from their Creation I suppose some time since; for the good Angels as well as bad were created mutable, but Gods immutability is from eternity. The whole World indeed is a Sea of Glass, *Rev.* 4. 6. alwayes ebbing and flowing, never at a stay; but the Maker of the World may well say, *I the Lord change not*, Mal. 3. 6.

CHAP. V.

God incomparable in his Being, as it is eternal, and without composition.

GOd is an *eternal* Being, and none is eternal but he: *Time* which hath a beginning and end is competible

to Men, and other visible Creatures in this World. *Æriternity* which hath a beginning, and no end, is competible to good and evil Angels, and to the Souls of Men; but *Eternity* which hath no beginning, succession or end, belongs onely to God.

1. God hath no *beginning*: He who *in the beginning created the Heavens and the Earth*, could have no beginning himself, *Gen.* 1. 1. *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth and the World; from everlasting to everlasting thou art God*, Psal. 90. 2. God is eternal, *a parte ante*, and puzleth the most enlarged Understanding, to conceive his duration: *Behold he is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out*, Job 36. 26. Psal. 93. 2.

2. God hath no *succession* in his Duration: He dwelleth in one indivisible point of eternity; He is what he is in one infinite moment of being: His duration knoweth nothing of former or latter, past or to come: His Essence is not bounded by those Hedges, but he enjoyeth his whole eternity every moment:

Hence

Hence he is said to *inhabit eternity*, to be fixt alwayes in eternity, *Isa.* 57. 15. Time is *nunc fluens*, but eternity is *nunc stans: One day with him is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*, 2 Pet. 3. 8. He inhabits a million of years in a moment; and each moment to him is as a million of years: He hath not the least added to his duration since the World was, though it hath been near 6000 years: It's not proper to say of him, He *was* (for none of his duration is ever past with him) or he *shall be* (for none of his duration is ever to come) but *he is*, his full eternity is alwayes present; Hence his Name is *I am*, Exod. 3. 14. Not I was, or shall be; and Christ tells the *Jews*, *Before* Abraham *was*, *I am*, John 8. 58. It seems false Grammar, but it's the most proper true Divinity. Indeed, had *Adam* been then alive, it had been proper for him to have said, *Before* Abraham *was*, *I was*; or if an Angel had spoken, it had been proper for him to have said, *Before* Abraham *was*, *I was*, because Men and Angels enjoy their Being by piecemeals, now a little and then a little, somewhat of their duration is gone, and some-

what to come; but it was most proper for him that was God to say, *Before* Abraham *was, I am*, because his duration is without all succession, the whole of it is ever present: The *Psalmist* further cleares this, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, Psal. 2. 7. Which words are interpreted of the eternal Generation of the Son of God before all Worlds, and also of his Resurrection in time, which was to be some hundreds of years after, as the Apostle either expounds it, or alludes to it, *Acts* 13. 33. But it's all one, for both are *to day*; that which was from eternity, and that which was to be many hundred of years after, are both with him present *this day*.

Past or future is all present *this day*; that was not *past* to God, which never had beginning, his Sons eternal Generation; nor was that *to come* to God, which was alwayes before him, his Sons Temporal Resurrection. 'Tis still, *This day have I begotten thee*, millions of years, yea of Ages, add not the least moment to his duration.

3. God hath *no ending*: As he is from, so he is to everlasting, *Psal.* 90. 2. Without

out beginning or end of days; *Psal.* 102. 27. *But thou art the same, and thy years never end.* O what an excellent Being is this eternal Being? *He onely hath immortality,* 1 Tim. 6. 16. And he is eternity it self, 1 *Sam.* 15. 29. *Æternitas Israelis,* Jun. *The eternity of* Israel *cannot lye.*

But are Men or Angels comparable to *God* in this? Surely no: As for Man, he is a Bird of Time, here to day, and gone to morrow, *Job* 14. 1. Of *few days:* As for *Man, his days are as Grass,* Psal. 103. 15. Now flourishing, but quickly perishing.

Man hath a beginning, succession and ending. There was a Time when Man was not, Man enjoyeth his time by parts and parcels, and Man ere long shall be no more. All men in this are alike, high or low, good or bad: There is a vast difference between God and all Men in their duration; *Are thy dayes as the dayes of Man? are thy years as Mans years?* Job 10. 5. No, in no respect; Man's days begin, succeed and end; not so God's dayes. Well might *David* say (though he had lived as long as *Methuselah*), *Mine*

age is nothing unto thee, Psal. 39. 5. And truly as Men are far from being comparable to God, so are Angels: Angels had a beginning, *Coloss.* 1. 16. Angels have a succession in their duration, they enjoy part to day, part to morrow, part the next day, every moment addeth to their duration; what is past they do not enjoy, nor what is to come, but onely what is present; and thus it is also with Souls of Saints in Heaven.

8. God is a *simple* Being: In this I take simplicity, not as opposed to *Wisdom* (for in him are all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, *Coloss.* 2. 9.) but as simplicity is opposed to *mixture* and *composition*. Thus there is a simplicity in the Gospel, 2 *Cor.* 11. 3. So any thing, the more simple it is, the more excellent it is. God is a most pure simple unmixed indivisible Essence; he is uncapable of the least composition, and therefore of the least division. He is one most pure, one without all parts, members, accidents and qualities: Whatsoever is in him is himself, his very Being; therefore that which is a quality in a Man or Angel, is attributed to God in the abstract: Men

and

and Angels are wiſe, but God is *wiſdom*, *Prov.* 9. 1. Men and Angels are holy, but God is *Holineſs*, Iſa. 63. 15. God is all Eſſence, all Being, and nothing elſe.

But how unlike are Men or Angels to God in this: Man is a groſly compounded being, he is compounded of a Body and a Soul, *Gen.* 2. 7. His body is compounded of members and parts, his members and parts are compounded of bones and bloud, and fleſh, and skin, and ſinews, *Job* 10. 11. His Soul is compounded, and ſo are the higheſt Angels of ſubſtance and accidents, of eſſence and faculties; the ſubſtance of Man's Soul, and of Angels, and their qualities, are diſtinct things: Their Wiſdome is one thing, their Power another thing, their Holineſs a third thing, and all diſtinct from their Eſſence. An Angel may be an Angel, and a Man may be a true Man, and yet be fooliſh, weak and wicked. Their Underſtanding differeth from their Wills, their Wills differ from their Affections, their Affections differ from both, and all from their beings: But in God all theſe are one indiviſible Eſſence, to will and to underſtand, and

to love and to hate, and to be, are all the ſame and one in God.

CHAP. VI.

God incomparable in his Being, as it is Infinite and Incomprehenſible.

9. GOd is an *infinite* Being: He is a Being that knoweth no bounds, no limits. His Being is without all meaſure, all degrees and determinations. *His Underſtanding* (i.e. Himſelf, who is all Underſtanding) *is infinite*, Pſal. 147. 5. God is a Sphear, whoſe center is every where, and whoſe circumference is no where. *Behold the Heavens, and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee, how much leſs this Houſe which I have built*, 1 Kings 8. 27. The ſtarry Heavens, or Firmament, is large, it compaſſeth the whole Earth and Ocean; this terreſtial World is but a point to it, but the Heaven of Heavens, or the emperial Heaven is larger; it containeth the lower Heaven, but cannot contain the God of Heaven. No *ubi*, no place can define or circumſcribe him: He is neither

ſhut

ſhut up in any place, nor ſhut out of any place. He is above place, without place, yet in all places. *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit? or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I aſcend up into Heaven, thou art there; If I make my Bed in Hell,* (Heaven and Hell are moſt oppoſite places) *Behold thou art there: If I take the wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea; Even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me,* Pſal. 139. 7, 8, 9, 10. God is in Heaven, Earth, Sea, Hell, and infinitely more, where there is neither Heaven nor Earth, nor Sea, nor Hell.

O what a Being is the bleſſed God, who is boundleſs not onely in his duration, of which we have ſpoken before, and in all his Perfections and Attributes, of which we ſhall ſpeak hereafter, but alſo in his Eſſence and Being. No place can circumſcribe him, and no *ubi* can define him. *He is over all* (Creatures by his Power and Dominion) *in you all* (by his Eſſence and Influence) *and through all* (by his Providence) *Epheſ.* 4. 6. He is every where, not onely *virtually*, as the Sun by his beams; nor *authoritatively*, as

as a King, by ſubordinate Officers; not at all by *multiplication*, as the Loaves filled that place, which they did not before the Miracle; or by *extention*, as the rational Creature filleth that place, when a Man, which he did not, when an Infant; nor by *local motion*, from one place to another, as all bodily animate Creatures; or by diviſion, as our Bodies are part in one place, and part in another; or by commixtion, as the Air mingleth it ſelf with the terreſtrial World; but eſſentially, after an unſpeakable manner. As Philoſophers ſay of the Soul, It's whole in the whole body, and whole in every part of the body: So I may ſay of God, He is whole in the whole World, and whole in every part of the World; yea, if he ſhould pleaſe to make 10000 Worlds, he would fill all, and his whole Eſſence be in every part of each World, and yet without the leaſt extenſion or multiplication, or motion.

Homo eſt in loco circumſcriptive, Angelus definitive, Deus Repletive.

But are Men or Angels like to God in this? Alas, they are finite limited Beings, leſs then drops to this Ocean. Man is in a ſmall place, ſo as to fill it up by commenſuration of parts, and to exclude all

all other Bodies, but himself is circumscribed in it. Angels though they are not in a place so as to exclude Bodies, yet they are in an *ubi*, or space, so as to conclude themselves therein; they are in a finite compass, beyond which their being extendeth not; they are so here, that they are not there; so in Heaven, that they are not on Earth at the same time. But God is every where in his whole Essence every moment; *He filleth all in all*, Eph. 1. ult.

God is an *incomprehensible* Being, such a Being as no Creature, whether Man or Angel can comprehend, or perfectly understand. This floweth from the former; if he be infinite, he must of necessity be incomprehensible, for a finite Being (as all are beside himself) can never comprehend what is infinite. There is no proportion between a boundless Being and a bounded Understanding: But there must be a proportion between the mind of the Creature, and that object which is fully understood by it. The Sun may be contained in a small chink, and the Sea in a Nutshell, sooner then God can be contained in the limited under- 10.

understanding of Men or Angels; Job 26. 14. *Lo these are parts of his ways,* (viz. *Hell is naked before him,* ver. 6. *He hangeth the Earth upon nothing,* ver. 7. *He bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds, and the Cloud is not rent under them,* ver. 8. *He hath compassed the Waters with bounds,* ver. 10. *The Pillars of Heaven tremble at his Reproof,* ver. 11. &c.) *but how little a portion is heard of him.* The Vulgar read it, *How little a drop;* Others, A *whisper,* or smallest part of a Voice; that which is known of God, to that which God is, and is in God, is but like a drop to the vast Ocean; and as a Whisper, to a loud terrible Thunder; *How little a portion is heard of him.* Surely much is heard of him, from the Voice of his Almighty Works of Creation and Providence, and especially from the Voice of his Word and his own Mouth in the holy Scriptures: But *how little* is heard of him, in comparison of that immense excellency which is in him, and which he is. Heathens hear somewhat of him, *Rom.* 1. 20, 21. His Saints on Earth hear much more of him, *Psal.* 63. 3, 4, 5, 6. Perfect Spirits in Heaven hear most of

of all of him, 2 *Cor.* 12. 3, 4. 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. Yet by all these, a very *little portion is heard of him.*

The Being of God is like the Peace of God, *which passeth all understanding*, Philip. 4. 7. And like the Love of Christ, *which passeth all knowledge*, Ephes. 3. 19. This onely can be known of God, that he can never be known fully; and this onely can be comprehended of him, that he cannot be comprehended: *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It's as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper then Hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer then the Earth, and broader then the Sea*, Job 11. 8, 9. Canst thou by searching find out God: It's a strong Negation, *i. e.* 'Tis impossible by all the help and advantage of Nature and Art, and Grace and Diligence; yea, and perfect Glory too, to find out God fully. Dost thou a poor mean vile man (saith *Zophar*) think to contain and comprehend him, whom the Heavens, and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain or comprehend? Art thou so silly as to conceive, that the short line of thy understanding

derſtanding ſhould fadom his bottomleſs Being. It is not in vain for thee to ſeek him, but it is altogether in vain for thee to ſearch him. Though he be not far from thee, yet he is far above thee, and far beyond thee; far above thy thoughts, and beyond thy conceptions: He *dwelleth in that Light that is inacceſſible, whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. They who ſee him face to face, *i. e.* moſt clearly and fully ſee but little of him: Clouds and Darkneſs are in this ſenſe ever about him. As in a dark day we ſee the beams, but not the body of the Sun; ſo even in Heaven the higheſt Angels rather ſee his rays and beams, then his infinite Being.

Canſt thou find out the Almighty to perfection: Men who ſeek God, may find him, *Prov.* 8. 17. *Math.* 7. 7. but they cannot find him to perfection: The word *for perfection* ſignifieth the height or utmoſt accompliſhment of a thing. Somewhat of God may be known, but not all; They who find out moſt, are far from finding out the utmoſt of him. The Sun and all the cœleſtial Lights may ſooner be graſped in the hollow of mans hand,

hand, and the vast Hills and Mountains weighed in a pair of common Scales, then the Almighty *found out to perfection*. Natural questions soon pose the most learned men; the forms even of inanimate Creatures are Riddles to most. How frequently do the greatest Schollars betake themselves to secret Sympathies and Antipathies, and occult qualities, as the Cloak and cover of their Ignorance: Eccles. 11. 5. *Canst thou know how the Bones grow of her that is with Child?* O how much more must Divine questions exceed humane understanding.

It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? It's as the highnesses of Heaven: Take all the Heights and Elevations, all the Spheres and Altitudes of Heaven, and try if thou canst reach them with thy short Arm; yea, climb up the highest Stories, the loftiest Pinnacles, touch, if thou canst, the several Orbes; yet the knowledge of this God, or this God the object of knowledge, is above and beyond all. What a Fool would he be thought, who should undertake to ascend the starry Heavens; yet he who would find out God to perfection, must climb

climb much higher. The Heavens are famous for their height; yea, the starry Heavens, that some wonder that the eyes of man are not tired before they reach them; Prov. 25. 3. *The Heavens for height, and the Earth for depth*; Yet the third Heavens are much higher then they; but the most high God is far higher then the highest Heavens.

Deeper then Hell, what canst thou know? Heaven and Hell are at the greatest distance, and are most remote from our apprehensions. Who knoweth what is done in Heaven? what in Hell? what is enjoyed in the one, or suffered in the other? no more can any know what God is. Who knoweth the nature, number, order, motions, influence of the heavenly Bodies; something is conjecturally delivered about them, nothing certain; much less doth any know the number, nature, order, wonder, worship of the coelestial Courtiers in the third Heavens, of the thousand thousand that are before God, the ten thousand times ten thousand that minister to him; least of all can any know that Being that made all these, that preserveth all

all these, that ordereth and governeth, animateth and actuateth all these; that gives them all that they are, and enableth them to all that they do.

Deeper then Hell, what canst thou know? Who knoweth the Mines and Minerals which lie in the bosome, in the bowels of the Earth? Who knoweth the place of Saphires, the Coral, the Pearls, and the precious Onix: Job 28. 5, 6, 7, 8. *Out of the Earth cometh Bread, &c. The stones of it are the place of Saphires, and it hath dust of Gold: There is a path which no Fowl knoweth, and which the Vultures Eye hath not seen: The Lyons Whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce Lyon passed by it.* Much less doth any know the Miseries of the Damned, the extremity, universality, eternity of their Torments? Who ever returned from that place, to tell us what they suffered there; or if they had, whose Understanding is large enough to conceive them: *Who knoweth the Power of thine Anger? according to thy Fear, so is thy Wrath,* Psal. 90. 11. Least of all can any know that God, who setteth an end to Darkness, and searcheth out all Perfection; the stones of darkness and the Job 28. 3.

ſhadow of Death: Before whom Hell and Deſtruction are naked and open; who formeth the coſtly Jewels, ſecret from the Eyes of covetous Mortals; who layeth the dark Vault of Hell, and ſtoreth it with Fire and Brimſtone, and gnawing Worms, and blackneſs of darkneſs, and all the Inſtruments of eternal Death.

The meaſure thereof is longer then the Earth: The Earth is long, from one end of it to another. Mathematicians tell us, from Eaſt to Weſt, it's 22000 miles, but the knowledge of God is much longer; the meaſure thereof is beyond all meaſure.

And broader then the Sea: The Ocean is exceeding broad, it ſeems to them that Sail on it, to be without Banks or Bounds. Hence we read of the *Arms* of the Sea, *Dan.* 11.22. becauſe of its breadth. And *David* calls it, *Pſal.* 104. 25. *A great and wide Sea. So is this great and wide Sea, wherein are things innumerable, both ſmall and great.* But the knowledge of the great God is far greater and wider: How are the Dimenſions of height, depth, length and breadth, in their greateſt extent and dimen-

dimenſions obvious to humane Underſtandings. The Heavens are high, yet their height is finite: Hell is deep, yet its depth is determined; the Earth is long, yet its length is limited; the Sea is broad, yet its breadth is bounded: But God is infinite, boundleſs, and beyond all theſe.

CHAP. VII.

God incomparable in his Attributes, in his Holineſs and Wiſdom.

II. GOd is incomparable (as in his Being, ſo) in his *Attributes*. The Attributes of God, are thoſe perfections in the Divine Nature, which are aſcribed to him, that we might the better underſtand him. They are ſo called (*i. e.* Attributes) becauſe they are attributed to him for our ſakes; though they are not in him as they are in Men or Angels. *Vocantur Attributa quia ea ſibi attribuit Deus noſtra cauſa*, Zanch. de Attribut. lib. 2. cap. 12. *Attributa Dei dicuntur quæ Deo adſcribuntur in Scripturis ſacris,*

non tam ad eſſentiam naturamq; Dei explicandam, quam ad declarandum nobis aliquo modo pro noſtro captu illud quod de ipſo a nobis cognoſci poteſt, Polan. Syntag. lib. 2. cap. 6. There are ſome Attributes of God, which the School-men call *Incommunicable*, (which I have ſpoken of under the former Head) becauſe the Creature, as a Creature, is uncapable of them, and therefore they cannot be attributed to Man or Angels. It's impoſſible for a Creature to be independent, ſelf-ſufficient, eternal in a ſtrict ſenſe, infinite, &c. ſo that all will acknowledge God incomparable in thoſe excellencies. There are other Attributes of God which are called *Communicable*, *viz.* His Power, Holineſs, Wiſdome, Faithfulneſs, &c. becauſe they are communicated by him to his rational Creatures, and there is ſome ſhew or ſhadow of them in Men and Angels. For though it was the horrible Pride, and monſtrous preſumption of evil Angels, and *Adam*, at firſt to rival God in his Properties, that were incommunicable; to aſpire to be like him in his Independency and Sovereignty, (for their Sin was, that they would

would have cut off the Entail, and have held all of themselves, as their own Lords and Masters): And the Prince of *Tyre*, *Ezek.* 28. 6. is indicted by God of inexpiable arrogancy, *That he durst set his heart as the heart of God*: Yet it is the only godliness of the Creatures to be like God, in those Attributes of his which are communicable: The new man is *after God*, Ephes. 1. 24. The re-impression of his Image on the Creature. *David* is therefore called *a man after Gods own heart*, because he was a man after Gods own Holiness; yea, 'tis the perfection and felicity of the intellectual World, *Psal.* 17. *ult.* 1 *John* 3. 3, 4. in Heaven.

But even in these Properties, wherein Man resembleth his Maker, he is exceedingly unlike him, and falls infinitely short of him. That God is incomparable in his communicable Attributes, I shall discover.

1. More generally.
2. More specially.

1. More generally, and here I shall enumerate some of those Attributes, wherein Men and Angels are conforma-

ble to God, and in each of them ſhew that in thoſe in which they come neareſt him, they come far behind him.

1. He is incomparable in his *Holineſs*: Holineſs in general, is the *moral goodneſs* of a thing, or its *conveniency* or *agreement* with its *rule*. Holineſs in the Creatures, is their conformity to the will of their Creator, in the principle rule and end of their actions and motions: Holineſs in God is that excellency of the Divine Nature, by which he acteth from himſelf for himſelf, and according to his own will.

God is *the holy One*, Hoſ. 11. 9. by way of eminency and excellency, becauſe he ſurpaſſeth all others in holineſs. He is the *holy One of Jacob*, Iſa. 49. 23. *The holy One of Iſrael*, Iſa. 43. 14. becauſe of their ſpecial intereſt and propriety in the excellent Being. He is *holy, holy, holy*, Iſa. 6. 3. *Rev.* 4. 8. His Nature is the *onely pattern* of Holineſs, therefore he commands us to look on him as our Example; *Be ye holy as I am holy*, 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16. Man was made holy, *Eccleſ.* 7. 29. *i. e.* According to the Image of God, *Gen.* 1. 26. *Epheſ.* 4. 24. His will is the

onely

onely rule of Holineſs: Hence our holineſs is called a *proving his good and perfect and acceptable will*, Rom. 12. 2. and our fulfilling the will of God, *Acts* 13. And a walking according to his Word (which is his reveal'd will) as our Rule, *Gal.* 6. 16. He is univerſally holy in his Name, *Luke* 1. 49. In his Nature, *Pſal.* 5. 5, 6. *Hab.* 1. 13. In his Works, *Pſal.* 145. 17. In his Word, *Rom.* 7. 12. *Pſal.* 119. 140. He is the Original of all holineſs in Men or Angels; they are beholden to him that they are not as unholy as the Damned, as the Devils, *James* 1. 17. *Ezek.* 37. 28. *Ezek.* 38. 26, 27. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 23. Now what Man or Angel is comparable to him in holineſs. May I not, with *Moſes*, make a Challenge, *Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holineſs?* Exod. 15. 11.

Are Men holy as he is holy? nay, are the ſpirits of juſt Men made perfect, and Angels equal to him in holineſs? *Behold, he putteth no truſt in his Saints* (the beſt on Earth) *the Heavens* (the holieſt there) *are unclean in his ſight*, Job 15. 15, 16. As for man he is a Sink of Sin, a Stye of Filth, over-ſpread from Head to Foot

with the Leproſie of Sin, *Gen.* 6. 5. And therefore inſtead of comparing with God for holineſs, is bound to abhor himſelf for his unholineſs; yea Angels, who have nothing amiſs in their Natures, who never took one ſtep awry in their lives, who have ever continued Gods Loyal Subjects, and faithful Servants, obſervant of all his Calls, and obedient to all his Commands; whoſe obedience to him, and obſervance of him, is made the Copy for us to write after, *Math.* 6. 10. are yet unholy in compariſon of God: *The Heavens are unclean in his ſight.* The Heavens, not onely the place which hath a relative holineſs, in regard of Gods ſpecial preſence; but even the perſons in Heaven, perfect Spirits, who have no blemiſh in their Beings, or diſorder in their motions, are unholy to him, and unclean in his ſight. The holineſs of Angels, is but the holineſs of obeying a Law, *Pſal.* 103. 20, 21. the holineſs of God, is the holineſs of being a Law, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 3. The holineſs of Angels is but a conformity to the pattern ſet them, the holineſs of God is the holineſs of ſetting them a pattern, and of being

ing their pattern. The holineſs of Angels is but a derivative, Gods is an Original holineſs.

God is ſo incomparable in holineſs, that it's ſaid, He onely, or ſolely, is holy, Revel. 15. 4. *Who will not fear thee, O Lord, and glorifie thy Name, for thou only art holy.* None is holy beſides him, becauſe none is holy like him; 1 *Sam.* 2. 2. *There is none holy as the Lord*, therefore none holy but the Lord: Saints are holy, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. Angels are holy, *Mark* 8. 38. But they are not holy as the Lord is holy. Without queſtion, the heavenly Hoſt who ſee him face to face, and are ſatisfied with his likeneſs, are glorious in holineſs, ſhine brightly with thoſe perfect beams, and that pure light which they borrow from the Sun of Righteouſneſs; but truly they are poor Glo-worms to the Father of Lights. Even that Grace, that Holineſs, that Glory of Saints and Angels, which infinitely ſurpaſſeth the natural Heavens in all their beauty and brightneſs, is no Grace, no Holineſs, no Glory in this reſpect, by reaſon of that Grace and Holineſs, and Glory in God, which doth ſo infinitely excel.

2. God

2. God is incomparable in his *Wisdom* (I shall not stand upon the critical distinctions which some give between Understanding, Prudence and Wisdom): Wisdom in general is a right understanding of things, and the ordering our selves and actions sutable to that understanding. It appears chiefly in these three acts: 1. In discerning the nature, causes, effects, contraries, and consequents of things, (of which we shall speak hereafter); and this we call *Science.* 2. In propounding the best, and highest, and noblest end to our selves, in our actions and undertakings; and this is called *Understanding.* 3. In suiting and fitting, and ordering the most proper means, as may be best for the attaining our ends; and this is called *Prudence*, which, as the Rudder of the Ship, steers, and directs and governs all. In all these respects God is incomparable in Wisdom: He is *wise in heart*, Job 9. 4. *i. e.* most wise, for the *heart* is the seat of Wisdom. And to be foolish, and without an heart, is all one: *Ephraim is a silly Dove, without an heart*, Hos. 7. 11. There are in God all the *Treasures of Wisdom*, Coloss. 1. 19.

A Trea-

A Treasure denotes, 1. *Preciousness*; an heap of Dust or Coals is not a Treasure, but of *Silver* and *Gold*. 2. *Plenty*; one or two pieces of things that are precious will not make a Treasure, there must be an heap, or some quantity. In God there is the most precious Wisdom, therefore called *Counsell*, the effect of serious and mature deliberation; and he is called *The mighty Counsellor*, Eph. 1. 11. Isa. 9. 6. In God there is plenty of it, *Treasures*; a Treasure notes abundance, but Treasures speaks superabundance, a redundance. In God *are all the Treasures*, all kinds, all sorts of Wisdom, πολυποίκιλος σοφία, *manifold Wisdom*; embroydered Wisdom, wherein is all variety of rich and curious Contrivances. These are all in God, He ingrosseth them all in himself; therefore you read, *With him is Wisdom and Understanding*, Job 12. 13. *With him*, as with its Master and Soveraign Lord; with him, as with its sole Owner and Proprietor. Eph. 3. 10.

Some *men* are wise, *Light and Understanding, and excellent Wisdom was found in* Daniel, *Dan.* 5. 14. *David* was very wise, wiser then his *Teachers*, then his *Enemies*,

Enemies, then the *Ancient*, *Pſal.* 119. 97, 98, 99. *Solomon* was a wiſe man, he exceeded in Wiſdom all that were before him, and all that came after him: *And God gave* Solomon *Wiſdom and Underſtanding, exceeding much, and largeneſs of heart, even as the Sand on the Sea ſhore: And* Solomons *Wiſdom excelled the Wiſdom of all the Children of the Eaſt-Country, and all the Wiſdom of* Egypt. *For he was wiſer then all men, than* Ethan *and* Heman, *&c.* 1 Kings 4. 29, 30, 31. But was *Solomon* comparable to God in Wiſdom? Truly, he that was wiſer then all men, was a ſtark Fool to God; The Wiſdom of man is fooliſhneſs with God, 1 *Cor.* 3. 19. The ſubtilty of the Heathen (and, I may ſay, the greateſt underſtanding of the Chriſtian) is folly with God: *The fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than Man*, 1 Cor. 1. 25. If it were poſſible that there ſhould be any thing in God which might look like folly, or if it were lawful for us to conceive any action of Gods, which, compared with his deeper Contrivances, might have a ſhew of fooliſhneſs, yet even this were wiſer than the greateſt wiſdom of man: Angels are wiſer than Men.

Men. When the Woman would speak *David* to be very wise, above the rate of Mortals, she saith, *My Lord is wise as an Angel of God*, 2 Sam. 14. 20. The excellency of their Natures speaks the excellency of their Wisdom, for it's the Understanding that is the chief distinguishing faculty. But are Angels like God in Wisdom? No, they are Fools to him: *Behold, he putteth no trust in his Servants, he chargeth his Angels with folly*, Job 4. 18. Though they never thwarted the Divine pleasure, nor in any action manifested the least imprudence; yet before him they are indicted of folly, and to him will be proved guilty of it. Though they are not chargeable with actual, yet they are with potential folly; though God doth not indict them of absolute, yet he doth of comparative folly.

God doth so far exceed Angels and Men in Wisdom, That he is said onely to be wise: *To the onely wise God*, 1 Tim. 1. 17. *To God onely wise*, Rom. 16. 27. None are wise beside him, because none are wise to him, *Dan.* 5. 20. Wisdom is his, his Peculiar, his Prerogative, his wholly,

wholly, his onely; ſo his, that 'tis none's but his.

The wiſeſt Men and Angels ſtand in need of a Maſter to teach them, and a Tutor to inſtruct them; and were it not for the onely wiſe God, they would be as unwiſe *as the wild Aſſes Colt*, as fooliſh as Idiots, *Pſal.* 94. 10. But God is above all Teachers, all Tutors: Job 21. 22. *Shall any teach God knowledge.* Some perſons are uncapable of teaching, becauſe of their extreme weakneſs; *Ex quoris ligno non fit Mercurius*, their parts are ſo very low and mean, that they cannot be taught. But God is uncapable of teaching, becauſe of his immenſe Wiſdom: His abilities are ſo high, that they are above and beyond all inſtruction: Iſa. 40. 13, 14. *Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his Counſellor hath taught him?* The wiſe *Solomon* had his *Privy-Counſellors*; the wiſeſt Princes and States have their *Council-Tables*, and there is reaſon enough for it, becauſe two Heads are better then one (as we ſay) and two Eyes ſee more then one: *Two are better then one*, Eccleſ. 4. 9. And *in many Counſellors there is ſafety.* But God who is

is all Head, all Eye, all Understanding, needs none to advise or counsel him. Two Candles indeed are better then one, because the light of each is little and small, and capable of increase; but one Sun is better then a million of Candles, because its light is (after a sort) boundless, and uncapable of the least addition, or increase by millions of Candles: Verse 14. *With whom took he Counsel?* (with what Angel, with what Man, with what Politician did he ever consult,) *who instructed him in the Paths of Judgment?* (taught him what was just, what was unjust, what to do, what to forbear; how to govern and order the Affairs of the World, in what manner and measure to cut out and carve every ones portion.) *Who taught him knowledge, and shewed him the way of understanding?* Where is the Creature that can say, He obliged God, by giving him directions in any case? Where is the Man, the Angel, that can speak it, that he ever taught God one Lesson, or told him one Letter? If any such be, God will pay him well for his Learning: Rom. 11.34,35. *Who hath known the mind of the Lord,*

Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor? Who hath given to him, and it shall be recompenced to him again? We may know the mind of God for our instruction, but we can never know the mind of God for his instruction, 1 *Cor.* 2. *ult.*

3. God is incomparable in his *Power*: Power is that ability or force by which we act; Power in God is that Attribute by which he effecteth whatsoever he pleaseth. In this he hath no equal; *Who is a strong God like unto thee?* Psal. 89. 8. Where is the Being that is like him in strength? God is not onely strong, but *mighty in strength.* Job 9. 4. Not onely powerful, but *excellent in Power*, Job 37. 23. *Job* hath a notable expression, *Job* 9. 19. *If I speak of strength, loe he is strong*, i. e. As 'tis ordinary with us, when we would lift a man up to the height of praise for any quality in him, to say, *If you speak of Wealth, there's a rich man. If you speak of Learning, there is a Schollar for you*: So here saith *Job*, *If I speak of Strength, loe he is strong.* If I speak of strength and ability to contend and fight, loe, behold, wonder; here is one that is strong indeed, that never con-

contendeth, but he prevaileth; who never Combats, but he Conquers: *He is ſtrong* indeed, *He is ſtrong* to purpoſe, with effect. He can *offend*, and there is no ſtanding before him; Dan. 4. 35. *He doth whatſoever he will, and none can ſtay his Hand.* He can ſtop the motion of the ſtrongeſt Creature in its fulleſt ſwifteſt career, but none can ſtop or ſtay him in his Actions. Many have preſumption enough to oppoſe him, but none have Power enough to overcome him. He can *defend*, and there is no ſtriving with him; Iſa. 43. 2. *When thou paſſeſt through the Waters* (be they never ſo boiſtrous, ſo tempeſtuous, ſo deep, ſo dangerous,) *I will be with thee, and they ſhall not overflow thee.* The Floods of the ungodly may be very fierce and violent, but they ſhall never over-flow, or over-come, thoſe whom God is pleaſed to protect. It muſt be a ſtrange and ſtrong Arrow that can pierce ſuch a Sheild, *Gen.* 15. 1. of defence.

David tells us, *God hath ſpoken once, yea twice have I heard thee*, Pſal. 62. 11. (It was ſome ſpecial extraordinary thing certainly that *David* uſhers in, with ſuch

a Preface, that God ſpake ſo ſolemnly, and he heard ſo attentively. But what was it?) *That Power belongeth to God*, as his proper peculiar Excellency, as his Crown and Scepter.

God is not onely Mighty, but *Almighty*; Not only *the Mighty God*, Iſa. 9. 6. but the *Almighty God*, 2 Cor. 6. 18. He is a God that never met with a Difficulty, much leſs with an Impoſſibility: Nothing is too hard for God, *Gen.* 18. 14. All things are hard to Men, and many things too hard for Men or Angels, but nothing is too hard for God: *I know that thou canſt do all things*, Job 42. 2.

Men are ſtrong, they may have a natural ſtrength as Men, a civil ſtrength as Magiſtrates; they may be too ſtrong in themſelves for other perſons, and too ſtrong in their Armies and Militia's for other Kingdoms and Countries; but are they ſtrong enough for God? ſurely No, 1 *Cor.* 1. 25. *The weakneſs of God is ſtronger then Man*; *Ubi Deus virtutem ſuam occultando infirmiter agere videtur, robuſtior tamen illa quæ putatur imbecillitas, quares hominum virtute*, Calv. in Corinth. Not that there is any weakneſs

neſs in God, (for ſhould any think ſo, he ungods him,) but in thoſe Actions wherein God is pleaſed to conceal his Power, and ſeemeth to act infirmly; even that ſeeming infirmity excells all Humane power and ſtrength. Hence it is, that God throweth down the Gantlet to *Job*, Job 40. 9. *Haſt thou an Arm like God.* (By Arm, is meant Power and Strength, becauſe the Arm is that member of Man by which he exerteth and exerciſeth that power and ſtrength which he hath, ſo *Job* 35. 9.) *i. e. Job*, though thou haſt had a ſtrong natural Arm, and a ſtrong civil Arm, *as the greateſt man in the East*, and *a King in the Army*, Job 1. 3. *Job* 29. 25. Yet *haſt thou an Arm like God*; Canſt thou make and unmake, kill and make alive, caſt down and lift up at thy pleaſure, as I do? Is thine Arm as long to reach all thine Enemies, and as ſtrong to break and bruiſe them in pieces with a blow; *Haſt thou an Arm like God?* Canſt thou brandiſh and wield a Sword with thine Arm to the terror and horror, to the confuſion and deſtruction of all that oppoſe thee? *God hath a mighty Arm, ſtrong is*

his Hand, high is his right Hand, Psal. 89. 13.

Angels are stronger then Men: The evil Angel is call'd *The strong man*, Luke 11. 21. They are stiled *Principalities and Powers*, Ephes. 6. 12. *Roaring Lyons*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. *Red Dragons*, Rev. 12. 9. which denote their Power to be far superiour to Mans. The Devil is the *Prince of the Powers of the Air*, Ephes. 2. 2. Can command Storms and Tempests, and with a puff of his mouth blow down Houses and Cities. Good Angels (probably) are stronger, one of them in a night destroyeth 184000 men. They are so strong, that they are said *to excel in strength*, Psal. 103. 20. And indeed, the spirituality and purity of their natures speaks their Power. Man's weakness is partly from his Flesh, which is a phrase whereby the Prophet describes the impotency of the Creature: *They are Men, and their Horses are Flesh, and not Spirit*, Isa. 31. 3. (And when the Holy Ghost would describe the strength of a thing, he opposeth it to Flesh, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. Our Weapons are not *fleshly or carnal*, but *mighty*,) partly from his moral filthiness, his

his sin, which being a real Disease, doth debilitate and weaken the powers of man: Hence to be a Sinner, and to be without strength, is all one, *Rom.* 5. 6, 8. and Holiness is called *The strength of man*, Rev. 3. 8. But Angels are Spirits, not Flesh; *He maketh his Angels Spirits*, Psal. 104. 4. And good Angels are free from sin, therefore called *holy Angels*, Mark 8. 38. Yet notwithstanding all their Power as Spirits, as sinless Spirits, they are weakness to God. As 'tis said of Leviathan, *He esteemeth Iron as Straw, and Brass as rotten Wood.* Job 41. 27. So I may say of God, He esteemeth the strength of evil Angels as Straw, and of good Angels as rotten Wood. Evil Angels are fettered, where-ever they go, in the Chains of his Anger and his Power, which they cannot break asunder, but must bear as intollerable as they are. And good Angels own and acknowledge his might and strength above all other, *Revel.* 4. 8, 11. The Power of God hath no Fellow, no Parallel. *There is no Rock* (*i. e.* no strength, Rocks being strong natural Fortifications, *Vide* 1 *Sam.* 14. 4. *Judges* 6. 16.) *like our God*, 1 Sam. 2. 2.

4. God is incomparable in his *Justice*: Justice in general, is the giving every one their due. In God it is that Attribute, whereby he disposeth all things according to the Rule of Equity, *Deut.* 32. 4. *Psal.* 11. 5. And rendereth to every man according to his works, without respect of persons, *Psal.* 62. 12. *Job* 34. 11, 19. *Gal.* 6. 6, 7. God is positively or affirmatively just; Eph. 3. 5. *The just Lord is in the midst thereof, he will not do iniquity.* He is eminently the *just One*, Acts 7. 52. He is superlatively *most just*; Job 34. 17. *Wilt thou condemn him that is most just?* altogether just; or as some read it, *Justice, Justice*, without the least mixture, tincture or shadow of injustice, all over just and justice. He is most just, just in the highest degree, just beyond all degrees. He giveth to all their due, without fear of evil, (He standeth in awe of none for their power or greatness, His day of Vengeance is *against the Cedars of* Lebanon, *and the Oakes of* Bashan, *and all the high Mountains*, Isa. 2. 13, 14.) without hope of gain, (men are unjust for Bribes, *Hos.* 4. 14. and love with *shame give ye*; but

Riches

Riches prevail not in the day of his Wrath; Prov. 11. 4. *Ezek.* 7, 19. He is no taker of Gifts, 2 *Chron.* 19. 7.) and without reſpect to any, for their nearneſs or relation to him, or Honors, or outward Excellencies; *Jer.* 22. 24. He will pluck the *Signet from his right hand* in the day of his Juſtice: *Iſrael* were a People *near to him*, Deut. 4. 7. *Pſal.* 148. *ult.* Yet he doth not ſpare them, when they rebel againſt him, *Pſal.* 74. 1, 2, 3. *Pſal.* 44. 10. to 15. *Jer.* 7. 12. Read the *Lamentations* of *Jeremiah*, and you will find his ſeverity to them, notwithſtanding their near relation to him. *Adam* and Angels were great & excellent Beings, yet when they ſinned, he made them to ſuffer: *He accepteth not the Perſons of Princes, nor regardeth the Rich more then the Poor*, Job 34. 19. He acteth according to Law moſt exactly, and according to a Law publiſhed, and according to a moſt righteous and juſt Law, *Rom.* 2. 12, 13, 15, 16. *Rom.* 7. 12. therefore is moſt juſt: *Surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert Judgment*, Job 34. 12. Surely the Almighty cannot do wickedly, neither can God pervert

Judgment: Men *may* do juſtly, God *muſt* do juſtly, he cannot but do juſtly; and that becauſe his Will is his Law, and the moſt exact Plat-form and Rule of all Juſtice and Righteouſneſs. Whatſoever he doth is juſt, becauſe he doth it who is the great Soveraign and Supreme of the World, *Job* 34. 12, 13.

The Actions of God are often *myſterious*, but ever *righteous*; *Pſal.* 145. 17. *The Lord is holy in all his Wayes, and righteous in all his Works*; When his *Pathes* are *in the Seas*, and *his goings in deep Waters*, Pſal. 77. 19. That none can fathom them, or find out the reaſon of them, even then all his wayes are *Judgment*, Deut. 32. 4. Not as Judgment is oppoſed to Mercy, but as Judgment is oppoſed to injuſtice. When *Clouds and Darkneſs are before him*, (*i. e.* when his Providences are ſuch hard Texts, that none can expound them; and ſuch dark Riddles, that none can unfold them, even then) *Righteouſneſs and Judgment are the habitation of his Throne*, Pſal. 99. 2. His diſpoſing and diſtributive Power moves alwayes within the Sphere of Righteouſneſs.

Men

Men may be juſt, *Math.* 1. 19. *Joſeph* was a juſt man; *Noah*, Gen. 6. 9. *John*, Mark 6. 20. *Cornelius*, Acts 10. 22. *But ſhall mortal man be more juſt then God? ſhall man be more pure then his Maker*, Job 4. 17. The Expreſſion is a denial of all compariſon between God and Man: It's the higheſt preſumption for Man to prefer himſelf before God, *Iſa.* 14. 13, 14. Yea, it's monſtrous impudency for Man to compare himſelf with God. We ſay amongſt men, That compariſons are odious, but this is the moſt odious compariſon of all, for *Enoſh*, a weak frail Creature, to compare with *Elchah*, the Mighty, Almighty Creator; for crookedneſs to compare with ſtraitneſs, and Darkneſs to compare with Light: The moſt juſt man compared with God, is unjuſt; His Righteouſneſs is as a filthy rag: *In his ſight can no Fleſh be juſtified*, Pſal. 143. 2. Though in the ſight of men, a man may be juſt, yet in the ſight of God he is unjuſt: Compare a Star with a Candle, and 'tis ſomewhat; but compare it with the Sun, and 'tis nothing; it muſt hide its head for ſhame. Compare a godly man with a wicked man, or one

not

not ſo good as himſelf, and he is ſomebody; but compare him with an Angel, he is no body: what is he then, if he be compared with a God? Job 9. 2,3. *How ſhould man be juſt with God?* (ſpeak the way, declare the means, the manner, how man ſhould be righteous before God,) *If he will contend with him, he cannot anſwer him one of a thouſand*; Not to one Queſtion of a thouſand which God can put to him, not for one Action of a thouſand which himſelf hath wrought. Alas, is he juſt, who is ſo far from ability to juſtifie all he doth, that he cannot juſtifie one act of a thouſand that he doth.

Angels are juſt, they are righteous in their natures, have no ſpot; in their lives have no Error, *Pſal.* 103. 20. But are they righteous to God, or before God? No, *Job* 4. 16, 17, 18. Angels are nothing in juſtice to God; though they are juſt to Man, they are unjuſt to God: They are in a poſſibility (conſidered in themſelves) of actual injuſtice, which God is not; he is incapable of being unjuſt. Again, the Law or Rule of Angels Righteouſneſs is without them, and diſtinct

distinct from them, (and thereby they are the more capable of swerving from it) but the Law or Rule of Gods Justice is within him; yea, 'tis himself; he is his own Law, his own Rule, and therefore 'tis impossible for him to recede, or err from it. When the Workman and his Rule are different, there may be fear of wandring from his Rule; for though the Rule be strait, yet the Man may, through the mistake of his Eye, or shaking of his Hand, draw a crooked Line; but when the Workman and his Rule are the same, there is no fear: God's Will that acteth all things, is the Rule by which he acteth; and therefore every Line must be strait, and every Action just. He can never err in any thing he doth, whose Will is the Rule of all he doth; nay, whose Actions are their own Rule. Such is the Creatures weakness, that he may wander out of his way; but such is the Creators Power and Perfection, that he cannot possibly wander, because he is his own way; *Dan.* 4. 35. *I Nebuchadnezzar blessed the most High, who doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of*

the

the Earth. Observe, who doth according to his Will, that is his essential eternal Rule: God doth so much surpass Men and Angels in Justice, that he is said to be the *Habitation of Justice*; Jer. 50. 7. *They have sinned against the Lord, the Habitation of Justice*; as if Justice dwelt no where, had no abode but in him and with him.

CHAP. VIII.

God incomparable in his Attributes, in his Knowledge and Faithfulness.

5. GOd is incomparable in his *Knowledge:* Knowledge is that Attribute of God, whereby he understandeth all things in and of himself. He is stiled in the Scriptures, 1 Sam. 2. 3. *A God of Knowledge: The Lord is a God of Knowledge, and by him Actions are weighed.* As Christ is called a *Man of Sorrows*, Isa. 53. 3. To express the greatness of his Griefs, to denote him one made up of Sorrow; little else then Sorrow: So God is called *a God of Knowledge*, to express

expreſs the greatneſs of his Knowledge; as if he were wholly, and onely Knowledge. Hence he hath *Eyes* and *Ears* attributed to him, becauſe he knoweth all that is done as an Eye-witneſs, and whatſoever is ſpoken as an Ear-witneſs, 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. *Pſal.* 11. 7.

The Underſtanding of God is like himſelf, infinite, without bounds or limits; Pſal. 147. 5. *His Underſtanding is infinite.* He is ſaid, *Job* 37. 16. To be *perfect in Knowledge*; not onely comparatively, (as one man may be in reſpect of another, or as an Angel may be in reſpect of Man) but abſolutely to his Knowledge; nothing can be given or added from his Knowledge, nothing can be taken: His Knowledge is ſo perfect, that it admits not of an increaſe or decreaſe. Men are knowing; *Solomon* was famous for Knowledge, 1 *Chron.* 1. 12. He could ſpeak of the nature of all Plants, from the *Cedar* to the *Hyſop*, 1 *Kings* 4. 33. The *Romans* are ſaid *to be filled with all Knowledge*, Rom. 15. 14. Angels are more knowing then Men: Fleſh is dull-ſighted, and of dim underſtanding; Spirits have ſharper Wits, and quicker Appre-

Apprehensions. The Devil, though a fallen Angel, hath one of his names *Dæmon*, from his Knowledge: Elect Angels surely know much more then Devils, for they alwayes *Behold the Face of their Father*, and in that Face, as in a Glass, behold more then humane Eyes can discern, or evil Angels conceive. The Spirits of just Men in Heaven *see Face to Face, and know as they are known*, understand very much more then they could here below; but Angels, as their Understandings are of larger capacity, and their Natures more excellent, must needs know more then Men: But do Men or Angels know as God; Can it be said of any Man, of any Angel, *He is perfect in Knowledge*: His Knowledge is uncapable of addition or diminution. Can it be said of any Man, any Angel, his Knowledge *is infinite*. Man's knowledge in this World is little, in comparison of what it shall be; yea, nothing: We are but of Yesterday, and know nothing, *Job* 8. 3. He is but of small continuance here, and hath but little experience; and therefore must have but little knowledge, yea so little, that it's call'd nothing:

nothing: yea, the knowledge of Men and Angels in the other World will be so little (though enough for their perfection and satisfaction) that it will be nothing, in comparison of the knowledge of God; finite knowledge is nothing, compared with that knowledge which is infinite.

Whether you consider the matter or object of God's Knowledge, or the manner or way of it, he is incomparable in it.

1. If you consider the *matter* or *object* of his Knowledge: God knoweth all things; John 21 17. *Lord thou knoweſt all things*: 1 John 3.20. *God is greater then our Hearts, for he knoweth all things.* He knoweth whatsoever hath been, whatsoever is, whatsoever shall be, whatsoever can be, whatsoever cannot be. He knoweth all substances, accidents, necessary contingent things: He makes all, upholds all, governs all, and discerneth all: The Eyes of the Lord are in every place, 2 *Chron.* 16.3.

He knoweth those things that are most *hidden*, most secret, the Hearts, the Thoughts, the most close retired motions

tions of the Spirit of Man; 1 *Cor.* 2. 11, *What man knoweth the things of a man, but the ſpirit of a man that is in him?* Yea, what Angel knoweth the things of a man? but God doth. *Hell and Deſtruction are before the Lord; how much more the hearts of the Children of Men,* Prov. 15. 11. Hell ſeems to be far from his ſight, and very remote from Heaven his Seat: The hearts of the Children of men ſeem to be unſearchable, ſo deep that none can fathom them; but he hath a Line that will ſound theſe depths: He knoweth the ſpirit of man, better then man knoweth himſelf: *The heart is deceitful, and deſperately wicked, who knoweth it?* (No Man, no Angel knoweth it,) *I the Lord ſearch the Heart,* Jer. 17. 9, 10. And none knoweth it but he, therefore he is incomparable herein; *For thou, thou only knoweſt the Hearts of the Children of Men,* 1 Kings 8. 39. It's his ſole Prerogative: Men and Angels may ſee the Skins and Colours, and Lineaments and Proportions, and Faces and Garments, or out-ſides of things; but God ſeeth the in-ſides, he pryeth into the very bowels of things, 1 *Sam.* 16. 7. All things are naked and diſſected

dissected and anatomized before him; *Heb.* 4. 13. 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. *Psal.* 7. 10. *Jer.* 11. 20.

He knoweth what is future, as well as what is past and present: *Thou knowest my Thoughts afar off*, Psal. 139. 2. Long before I think them: They are in thy Thoughts, before they are in my Heart. Man knoweth not what a day is big with, or may bring forth, *Prov.* 27. 1. nor Angels neither; but God knoweth what is in the Womb of eternity, what all Ages and Generations shall produce: *He declares the end from the beginning, and from ancient time the things that are not yet done*, Isa. 46. 10. And tells us this is proper to himself, *Let them declare the things that shall come to pass, that we may know that they are gods*, Isa. 41. 23. Let them fore-tell what is future, and we will believe their Deity. Predictions are *Arcana Imperii*, those secret things that belong onely to God, *Deut.* 29. 29. *Isa.* 41. 22, 23, 26.

2. He is incomparable in the *manner* of his Knowledge: God knoweth all things *fully* and *perfectly*, Men and Angels know (what they do know) but

imperfectly, and by halves: They know but part of what is knowable, and they know this but in part. God beholds every thing throughly, as if (like a well-drawn Picture) he beheld that alone, and none but that, 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. *His Eye-lids try the Children of Men*, Psal. 11. 5. *i. e.* He hath a distinct certain critical through knowledge of them.

God knoweth all things *immediately*, by immediate intuition, not by species: Men know things either by the Senses, the Eyes, Ears, or Tastes; or by species taken in by the Sense, and imprinted on the phantasie, which are thence offered to the Understanding; or else by Faith, and the report of others, or by discourse and ratiocination. He knoweth one thing by another, the Conclusion by Mediums and Premises; the Causes by the Effects, and the Consequents by the Antecedents. Saints and Angels in Heaven know things in God, not in themselves: God knoweth all things in themselves, and seeth all things in himself, as in a Glass. Man in this World must have a twofold Light to see by; A light in his Eye,

Eye, and a light in the Air: But the Father of Lights needs no light to see by, *Darkness and Light are both alike to him*, Psal. 139. 12. His Eyes are as a *Flame of Fire*, He seeth in the Dark, *Revel.* 1. 14.

God knoweth all things *at once* (*uno actu & uno ictu*, as they say): Creatures know one thing by another, and one thing after another; Their Understandings are unable to take in many Objects at once, much less able to take in all Objects at once; but God seeth all things at one View: *The Lord looketh down from Heaven, he beholdeth all the Children of Men: From the place of his Habitation he beholdeth all the Inhabitants of the Earth*, Psal. 33. 13, 14. The Eye of Man may see many things at once, as an Hive of Bees, but if it will see other things, it must remove the sight; though the Mind of Man can take in more then the Eye, as a whole Country or World at once, yet 'tis onely the lumpe or gross; if it would take the distinct knowledge of them, it must remove from thought to thought; but God takes all distinctly particularly at once.

1. God knoweth all things *from everlasting*, before ever the World had a Being: Men and Angels may know what is, when it is, but cannot know it as God doth, before it was; Acts 15.18. *Known to God are all his Works, from the beginning of the World.* Before he erected the curious frame of the World, he knew all the Rooms and Furniture in it, all the motions and actions of all the Inhabitants of it. He doth by one pure, simple, undivided, eternal act of his Understanding know all things perfectly, immediately, distinctly, every moment.

6. God is incomparable in his *Truth and Faithfulness*: Truth is that Attribute in God, whereby he is in himself, as he reveals himself to be, and in his sayings and doings, as he speaketh and acteth.

God is Truth *in himself*, and Truth towards his Creatures: He is Truth in himself, 1. As he truly is, and really existeth: Hence he is stiled the *true God*, Jer 10. 10. *John* 17. 3. in opposition to Idols, or false gods, 1 *Thess.* 1. 9. So he is truly infinite, truly all-sufficient, truly eternal, truly immutable, &c. 2. As he is the unchangeable Archetipe and

and Idæa of all true things without himself, so all created things are true, as they answer their patterns in his mind. 3. In his immanent Actions, as his Decrees, and eternal Resolutions, are all certain, and attain a punctual accomplishment, *Psal.* 33.11. He is never deceived nor disappointed in his Purposes.

God is Truth *towards his Creatures*; 1. In his *Works*, as all his Actions of Creation, Preservation, Government, Redemption, are real, and not chimera's or appearances, *Rev.*15.3. *Psal.* 111. 7. *Deut.* 32. 4. *Psal.* 25. 10.

2. In his *Words*, all he saith is Truth: His *Precepts* are true, a perfect Rule of holiness, without any defect, *Psal.* 119. 86. *All thy Commandements are Faithfulness*, verse 142. *Thy Law is the Truth.* All his *Promises* are true, and shall be performed: *Not one good thing faileth of all that the Lord our God hath promised*, Josh. 23. 14. Hence the Gospel, the *compendium* of all the Promises, is often called *The Word of Truth*, James 1.18. And the Covenant of Grace is called *Sure Mercies*, Isa. 55. 3. All his *Prædictions* are true, and come to pass in their Sea-

ſon, *Hab.* 2. 3. *Rev.* 22. 6, 7. *Theſe are true and faithful Sayings*, Gen. 49. 10.

His Threatnings are true, and fail not, *Rom.* 2. 2. of their accompliſhment, 2 *Kings* 9. 26, 36.

He is Truth it ſelf, *John* 14. 6. *John* 17. 6. *Abundant in Truth*, Exod. 34. 6. *Truth, Truth: The Lord God of Truth*, Pſal. 34. 5. A God that *cannot lie*, Titus 1. 2. All lying ariſeth either from *forgetfulneſs*; Men break their word, becauſe their Memories are ſlippery; but *Oblivio non cadit in Deum*; He is ever mindful of his Word, *Luke* 1. 72. To remember his holy Covenant, *Pſal.* 106. 46. Pſal. 111. 5. *He will ever be mindful of his Covenant.* Or from *weakneſs*, ſome would, but want power to make good their Promiſes; though they were able when they promiſed, yet they are by ſome Providence or other diſabled, before the day of performance comes, but *the ſtrength of* Iſrael *cannot lie*, 1 Sam. 15. 29. The Rock, the eternity of *Iſrael* cannot lie; Or from *Wickedneſs*, ſome can, but will not make good their words; but God cannot be charged with any wickedneſs: Pſal. 92. ult. *There is no unrighteouſneſs in him*,

him, 1 *Kings* 22. 23. *Ezek.* 14. 9.

Men may be true, *Psal.* 15. 4. Angels are true; but neither Men nor Angels are true as God is, let them be put in the Scales with God; And *Men of high degree are Vanity, and Angels of the highest degree are a Lie: to be laid in the Ballance, they are altogether lighter then Vanity*, Psal. 62. 9. Read over God's Truth in himself, and you will see how far Angels come short thereof: Are they the Exemplar of all things? are all things true as they agree with the Idæa's in their minds? Consider his Truth towards his Creatures; Can it be said of an Angel, as of God, The Angel that cannot lie hath promised? *Titus* 1. 2. Are they under an absolute impossibility of deceiving? Surely if they be considered in themselves, it was as possible for them to lie, as for the Father of Lies. It's said of God, *It is impossible for him to lie*, Heb. 6. 18. But this cannot be spoken of Elect Angels considered in themselves. God is so true, that he onely is true, all to him are Lyars, *Rom.* 3. 4. *Revel.* 3. 7, 14.

CHAP. IX.

God incomparable in his Mercy and Patience.

7. GOD is incomparable in his *Mercy:* Mercy is an Attribute of God, whereby he pittieth and relieveth his Creature in misery. It's an Attribute which relateth to the *Creature* onely; God knoweth himself, and loveth himself, and glorifieth himself; but he is not merciful to himself: It is an Attribute that relateth to the Creature *in misery.* Justice seeks a *worthy* Object, Grace is exercised towards an unworthy Object, but Mercy looks out for a *needy*, an indigent Object. God is bountiful and gracious to Elect Angels, because they could not deserve that perfection and happiness which they enjoy; but he is not merciful to them, for they were never miserable. Fallen Man is the proper Object of Mercy, as being not only undeserving of the least good, but as also having plunged himself into all evil. Mercy is an Attribute, whereby he *pitti-*

eth

eth his Creature in misery: Hence he is said in Scripture (after the manner of Men) to have *tender Mercies*, Psal. 25. 6. And *bowels of Mercy*, Luke 1.58. And to be *afflicted in the Afflictions* of his People, *Isa.* 63. 9. And to have his *Soul grieved for the miseries of* Israel, *Judges* 10. 15, 16. As tender Parents are extremely troubled for the Afflictions of their Children, *Psal.* 103. 12, 13. So his *Bowels are turned within him, his Repentings are kindled together*, Hos. 11. 8, 9. Mercy doth not onely pity, but also *relieve* the afflicted; it hath an Hand to supply, as well as an Heart to pity those that are in Distress, *Isaiah* 34. 18. *Gen.* 19. 16.

The Attribute of Mercy is that which God glorieth in, and boasteth of, *Exod.* 33. 19. *Psal.* 103. 8. Noble and Heroick Spirits are ever gentle and merciful: The basest Minds are most cruel, and farthest from Mercy. God saith, *Fury is not in him*, Isaiah 27. 4. Judgment is his *strange Work*, Isaiah 28. 21. *He doth not afflict willingly*, Lament. 3. 33. *But delighteth in the Prosperity of his Servants*, Psalm 35. 27. It's not his Nature to disturb and

destroy

deſtroy Men, it's their Sin that forceth Thunderbolts into his Hands, *Iſaiah* 44. 22. His delight is in Mercy, *Micah* 7.18. The bleſſed God hath *multitude of Mercies*, Pſal. 51. 1. To anſwer the multitude of the Creatures Miſeries, *Abundant mercy*, 1 Pet. 1.3. He is ſaid to be *rich in mercy*, Epheſ. 2. 4. *Exceeding abundant rich in mercy*, Epheſ. 2. 7. His Mercy, as Oyl, ſwims on the top of all his Attributes, is his delight, Jer. 32. 41. *I will rejoyce over them, to do them good.* His Mercy, as Gold, being moſt excellent, over-layeth all his Works, *Pſal.* 145. 7. *His tender mercy is over all his Works.* His Mercy is to all admiration: *O how excellent is thy loving kindneſs*, Pſal. 36. 7. *O how great is thy goodneſs*, Pſal. 31. 19. His Mercy is beyond all Apprehenſion; Thy Mercy reacheth to the Heavens, *Pſal.* 108. 4. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. He is ſtiled *the Father of Mercies*, 2 Cor. 1. 3. Not the Father of Juſtice or Fury.

Mercy is the Joy and Pleaſure of God: Hence he is ſaid to have a Mercy-Seat, and to have a Throne of Grace, *Heb.* 9. 5. Sitting is a poſture of Eaſe and Reſt, but he riſeth to execute Juſtice, *Pſal.* 68. 1.

He

He doth rest in his Love, *Ephes.* 3. 17. Mercy is the Glory and Honour of God. When *Moses* desired to see the Glory of God, *Exod.* 33. 18. The Lord proclaims, *The Lord God gracious, merciful*, Exod. 34. 6, 7. When God promiseth to do great things for his People, That he will give them Health, abundance of Peace, cleanse them from all their Filthiness, and pardon all their Iniquities, *Jer.* 33. 7, 8, 9. He gives us the fruit of it, verse 9. *And it shall be to me for a Name of Joy, a Praise and Glory before all Nations.* His Mercy is his Riches, his Treasure; Hence he is said to be *Rich in mercy*, Eph. 2. 4.

God is merciful in all he doth, universally merciful: *All his wayes are Mercy and Truth*, Psal. 25. 10. The whole World is a Volume written within and without with Characters of Mercy. He is merciful to all Men; Psal. 145. 9. *sheweth mercy to thousands*, *Exod.* 20. 6. *Exod.* 34. 7. *Math.* 5. 45, 46. He is merciful at all times. His mercy endureth for ever, *Psal.* 118. 1. *Psal.* 136. 1, 2, 3. He is merciful in all respects; He giveth all sorts of Mercies, 1 *Tim.* 6. 13. *Eph.* 1. 3. 2 *Pet.* 1. 3, 4.

Men

Men are merciful, *Prov.* 11. 17. *Pſal.* 37. 26. So are Angels in a ſenſe; but none of them comparable to God: The tender Mercies of the Wicked, yea of the righteous Men, yea of Angels, are Cruelties to the Mercies of God. Have they ſuch Pity, ſuch Bowels for miſerable Creatures as God hath? Have they ſuch Power, ſuch Ability, to relieve afflicted Ones as God hath? Can they afford preſerving, protecting Mercy, as God, *Job* 10. 12. Pardoning and forgiving Mercy, *Micah* 7. 18. Purifying and renewing Mercy, *Epheſ.* 2. 4. Saving and eternal Mercy, *Tit.* 3. 5, 6. O how infinitely ſhort do they come of him. He is ſo incomparable in Mercy, that Mercy is ſaid to belong onely to him: *Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth Mercy*, Pſal. 62. 10. Unto thee, and none but thee. He is ſo merciful, that when his Bowels conflict with juſtice on the behalf of Sinners, and get the upper hand, he rejoyceth in the Victory; Mercy rejoyceth againſt Judgment, *James* 2. 14. He is ſo merciful, that he diſpenſeth with his own Inſtitutions, for the ſake of it, *Hoſ.* 6. 6. *Math.* 9. 13. with *Math.* 12. 7. Once more, he

is

is so merciful, that he is upbraided with it, as if he were too fond of that Attribute, and loved it over-much, Jonah 4. 2. *Was not this my saying in my own Country? for I knew that thou wast merciful.* Thou didst send me to Preach Destruction and Desolation to *Nineveh*, but when I received the Message, I knew all would be prevented by mercy, and that to Preach such a Threatning, was but to disgrace and dishonor my self, as a false Prophet, before the men of *Nineveh*; for I thought then, what is now come to pass, that notwithstanding the peremptorines of the Message, Mercy would interpose, and prove me false.

8. God is incomparable in his *Patience*: Patience is that Attribute in God, whereby he beareth with Sinners, and forbears or defers their Punishment; or that, whereby he expecteth and waiteth long for their Conversion. He is a God *slow to anger*, Psal. 103. 8. He waiteth on Men to do them good, *Isa.* 30. 18. He is *long-suffering*, 2 Pet. 3. 7, 9. Nay, *He endureth with much long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath*, Rom. 9. 22. He is the *God of Patience*, Rom. 15. 5.

The

The Patience of God is the more admirable, if we consider,

1. How *perfectly he hateth Sin*, *Psal.* 5. 4. *Hab.* 1. 13. *Prov.* 6. 16. And how offensive it is to him, it grieveth him, *Eph.* 4. 30. It presseth him as Sheaves press a Cart, *Amos* 2. 13. He is broken with their whorish Hearts, *Ezek.* 6. 9. Though he be infinitely perfect, that no Sin can be hurtful to him; yet he is so infinitely pure, that all Sin is hateful to him.

2. What an *affront Sin is to him*? A contempt of his Authority, therefore call'd a *despising* him, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. An ecclipsing his Honour, therefore call'd a *dishonouring* him, *Rom.* 2. 23. A contention with him for Mastery, therefore call'd a *fighting against him*, *Acts* 5. 39. *Job* 15. 25. A violation of his Commands, therefore call'd a *transgression of the Law*, 1 John 3. 4. It affronts his Wisdome, therefore call'd *folly*, 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. His Justice, therefore call'd *unrighteousness*, 1 *John* 1. 6, 7. His Patience, therefore call'd a *despising his long-suffering*, Rom. 2. 4. His Mercy, therefore call'd a *turning his Grace into wantonness*,

tonneſs, Jude ver. 4. His Truth, therefore call'd a *Lye*, *Iſa.* 44. 20. It muſt be infinite Patience, to bear with that which is the Object of infinite hatred.

3. *Who they are* who thus dare and provoke him? They are his Creatures, *Pſal.* 100. 2. whom he hath infinitely obliged, *Lament.* 3. 22, 23. And laden with innumerable Bleſſings, *Pſal.* 116. 12. And loved unconceiveably, *John* 3. 16. And ſeeks daily to over-come with his kindneſs, *Pſal.* 130. 5. *Hoſ.* 11. 1. Yet theſe turn Rebels and Traytors, deviſe and endeavour his Ruine, and joyn with Satan, his Arch-enemy, in order thereunto, *Eph.* 2. 2, 3. *Job* 15. 25, 26.

4. That he *knoweth* all Mens Sins, the number of them, the nature of them, all the aggravations they admit of: He knoweth their Thoughts, Words, Actions, *Pſal.* 139. I know all their Wickedneſs, and all their Sins, *Amos* 5. 12. *Ezek.* 11. 5.

5. That he hath *Power* in his Hands to avenge himſelf, when he pleaſeth; He can look, ſpeak, think, his Creature into Hell-fire: Here is the Miracle, He that

is

is great in Power, is slow to Anger, *Nah.* 1. 3.

6. That he is the *more provoked*, because of his Patience: The Revenues of Heaven are at present impaired by it; Good Men hereby question and quarrel with his Providence, *Psal.* 73. 2, 3, 4. *Jer.* 12. 1, 2, 3. Bad Men hereby are encouraged to continue in Sin, and to judge Him an Abettor of their Prophaneness, *Eccles.* 8. 11. *Psal.* 50. 21.

7. That he beareth notwithstanding all this, *Year after Year*, many Years, forty Years with the Jews, *Psal.* 95. 10. With the old World 120 Years, *Gen.* 6. 3. With the *Amorites* 400 Years, *Gen.* 15. 13, 14.

8. That he doth not onely forbear them, but also *do them good*: He continueth Life, and Health, and Food, and Rayment, and Friends and Relations; nay, the Gospel and Salvation, and seasons of Grace, and tenders of his Love and Favor, and of everlasting Life, *Acts* 17. 17, 18, 27, 28. *Luke* 19. 41. *Job* 21. 14, 15, 16. 2 *Cor.* 5. 19, 20.

Men are Patient: *Moses* was the meekest man on Earth, *Numb.* 12. 12. But could

could he bear as God? No. When the *Israelites* provoked him, he was impatient, Psal. 106. 33. *They provoked his Spirit, that he spake unadvisedly with his Lips.* The Apostles were good men, yet upon a little affront, they call for Fire from Heaven, *Luke* 9. 54. If God should be as impatient towards the most patient Men, as they are towards others, woe would be to them that ever they were born.

But though Men come short; yet, are not Angels as patient as God? Surely No, Angels cannot bear like God with such a froward peevish piece as man is: The Lord told *Moses*, That *he would not go up in the midst of them, least he should consume them for their Sins; but he would send an Angel before them, to drive out the* Canaanites, *Exod.* 33. 2. Yet verse 4. *When the People heard these evil Tydings, they mourned; and no Man did put on his Ornaments.* What evil Tydings? 1. They should have an *Angel* for their Guide and Guard, that was both stronger and wiser then any Men. 2. An Angel that *should drive out their Enemies*, (God undertaketh for that) and bring them into

the beſt Country under Heaven. 3. God gives them the reaſon why he declines their immediate Conduct, leaſt their ſtubbornneſs ſhould provoke him to deſtroy them; yet they weep and mourn at theſe tydings. Alas, they knew if God could not bear with their Provocations, much leſs could Angels; and therefore if Angels be their Guides, they muſt periſh. If they could tire out infinite forbearance, and drain an Ocean; they muſt needs quickly tire out finite Patience, and drain a little Stream: How ſoon would limited forbearance, and a drop of patience be ſpent. God is ſo incomparable in his patience, that he is called *The God of all Patience*; not onely becauſe he hath all manner of patience in him, but becauſe he hath ingroſt it all to himſelf.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

God incomparable in his Attributes, as they are from him, as they are his Eſſence, as they are all one in him, as they are in him in an infinite manner.

2. I Shall ſhew more ſpecially the difference between God and his Creatures, in reference to theſe communicable Attributes.

1. Theſe Attributes are all *eſſential to* God: They are from God, as well as in God. He is their *Author*, as well as their *Subject*: But in Men and Angels they are all derivative; though Truth, and Juſtice, and Holineſs, may be in them, yet they are not from them, but from God. God is not obliged to any but himſelf for them; He can thank onely himſelf that he hath them, but Angels and Men are not obliged to themſelves, but to him for them. When the high God would lay *Job* low, by manifeſting the vaſt difference between himſelf and *Job*; He bids *Job* be obliged to himſelf for his Excellency, *Deck thy ſelf with Majeſty* Job 40. 10.

and Excellency, array thy self with Glory and Beauty. To be deckt and array'd with Majesty and Excellency, notes, 1. The extent and abundance of it, the whole man is cover'd with Rayment. To be cloath'd with shame, is to be extremely reproached, *Psal.* 35. 26. To be arrayed with humility, is to be very humble, lowly in an extraordinary degree, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. 2. The publikeness of it; our Deckings and Rayments are visible, we cannot go abroad, but all see our Clothes. God speaks to *Job* to this purpose, *Job, thou hast talk'd very presumptuously, and carried thy self as if there were no great distance or difference between Me and thy self, as if thou wert like me, and and equal to me: If thou art, let me see it; Deck thy self with Majesty and Excellency, array thy self with Glory and Beauty. I can deck my self, and array my self with all these in the highest degree, and will not be beholden to any others for their help: I am clothed with Majesty, but no Creature lent an hand for the making up, or puting on those Clothes:* Psal. 104. 1. *I have cover'd my self with light as with a Garment,* Psal. 104. 2. *But neither Man*

nor

nor Angel afforded me the leaſt aſſiſtance therein. Do thou as much for thy ſelf as I have done for my ſelf, and then indeed thou mayſt compare with me. God might make the ſame offer to Angels which he doth to *Job*, and none of them would or could accept it. Dependance is of their eſſence, as they are Creatures; and they can no more be ſeparated from it, then from themſelves.

2. Theſe Attributes are the *very eſſence of God*; not Qualities or Properties, as in Men and Angels. The holineſs of God is the *holy God: Once have I ſworn by my Holineſs*, Pſal. 89. 36. (*i. e.* by my ſelf,) *that I will not lye unto* David. For *Heb.* 6. 13. God *having no greater to ſwear by, ſwore by himſelf.* The Power of God is the powerful God, the Truth of God is the true God, the Wiſdom of God is the wiſe God. All his Attributes are himſelf, his Eſſence: In Men and Angels, their Wiſdom, and Power, and Juſtice, and Truth, are Accidents, and differ from their Subſtances; and this is apparent, becauſe Angels and Men may be, and are, without theſe Attributes, as Devils and wicked Men. In them theſe

Properties are one thing, and their Eſſence is another thing, ſo that they may be ſeparated. An Angel may be an Angel, and not holy, nor wiſe, nor juſt, &c. A Man may be a Man, and not powerful, nor patient, nor merciful; and the reaſon is, becauſe theſe Properties are really diſtinct from the Eſſences of Men or Angels; but in God they are his very Being and Eſſence; they are himſelf, and can no way be ſeparated from him, no more then he can be ſeparated from himſelf: God could not be God, if he were not moſt wiſe, moſt holy, moſt juſt, moſt patient, &c. God's Attributes are one moſt pure Eſſence diverſly apprehended of us, as it is diverſly manifeſted to us. God's puniſhing the Wicked, is his Juſtice; God's performing his Promiſes, is his Faithfulneſs: His relieving the Miſerable, is his Mercy: His bearing with the Guilty, is his Patience; ſo all are his Eſſence, himſelf.

3. Thoſe Attributes are *all one* in God: His Juſtice, is his Mercy; and his Wiſdome, is his Patience, and his Knowledge, is his Faithfulneſs; and his Mercy, is his Juſtice, &c. Though they are diſtin-

distinguished, in regard of their *Objects*, and in regard of our *Apprehensions* of them, and in regard of their *Effects*: yet they are all one in themselves, and this floweth from the former head, because they are the Essence of God, and his Essence is a pure undivided Being. In Men and Angels, these Attributes or Perfections are different and several, for they may have one without the other: Their Righteousness is one thing, and their Power another thing, and their Truth a third thing: For we see in Angels some that are strong and powerful, that are not righteous or faithful; and among Men, some have one of these Perfections who have not another; yea, though in good men all these perfections are in some degree, yet all are not in any one in the same degree; there is scarce any Saint who is not more eminent for some spiritual excellency then for others. But in God they are all one and the same. As when the Sun-beams shine through a yellow Glass, they are yellow; a green Glass, they are green; a red Glass, they are red; and yet all the while the beames are the same: Or as when the

Sun ſhines on Clay, it hardens it; on Wax, it ſoftneſs it; on ſweet Flowers, it draweth out their fragrancy; on Dunghills and Ditches, it draweth out their ill ſavours: yet ſtill it's the ſame Sun, and the ſame Influences; the difference lyeth in the Objects and the Effects. So the great God, who is alwayes working in the World, when he worketh towards the Wicked in puniſhing, he is righteous; towards the Godly in ſaving them, he is merciful; yet ſtill the ſame immutable God.

4. All theſe Attributes are in God *in the higheſt degree*; yea, beyond all degrees: Theſe communicable Attributes which are in Angels and Men in degrees, and limited, (for a finite Subſtance will not admit of an infinite Property) are in God infinitely. Immenſity, like a golden Thread runs through all his communicable Properties: *His Underſtanding is infinite*, Pſal. 147. 5. So his juſtice is infinite, his Mercy is infinite, and all the reſt: They have no bounds, no limits, but his own will and pleaſure. He never acted to the utmoſt in any of them; he never put forth ſo much Power, but he could

could put forth more if he pleased: He never exercised so much Patience, but he could exercise more if he would.

Hence it is, That in Scripture that they are affirmed of God not onely in the concrete, but also in the abstract. He is not onely loving, but *Love*, *God is love*, 1 John 4. 7. He is not onely wise, but *Wisdom*, Prov. 9. 1. *Wisdom hath built her House*: He is not onely good, but *goodness*; *I will make all my goodness* (*i. e.* my self,) *pass before thee*, Exod. 33. 19. He is not onely holy, but holiness: *Look down from Heaven, the Habitation where thy holiness dwelleth*, Isa. 63. 15. Therefore these Attributes of God must be boundless, because they are his Being himself.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

God incomparable in his Works, Creation and Providence.

Thirdly, GOD is incomparable in his *Works*, as well as in his Being and Attributes: None hath such a strong Hand, such a stretched out Arm, or can do like him. *O Lord* (saith *Moses*) *thou hast begun to shew to thy Servant thy Greatness, and thy mighty Hand: For what God is there in Heaven or on Earth, that can do according to thy Works?* Deut. 3. 24. He is a God *doing Wonders*, Exod. 15. 11. His Doings are like his Being: He works like a God, *Isa.* 28. 29. He is *wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in working:* His Works are all wonderful, *Psal.* 86. 10. *Thou dost marvellous things, thou art God alone.* He doth *miranda stupenda*; so that it is said of him, *Numb.* 23. 23. *What hath God wrought?* His Works are *great*, Joel 2. 21. *Honourable and glorious*, Psal. 111. 3. *Perfect*, Deut. 32. 4. *God thundereth marvellously with his Voice, great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend*, Job 37.

37. 5. The Works of Men and Angels are little, ſmall; ſome mean things they do by Divine concurrence; but his Works are great and unſearchable, which we cannot comprehend. If Creatures do great things, (in a ſenſe, or comparatively,) yet they may be *found out*; their Fellow-Creatures have a Clue which will lead them into all their Labyrinths, and a Line which will ſound the bottome of all their Actions; but God's Works cannot be comprehended by the underſtandings of any Creature: *O the depth of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God; how unſearchable are his Wayes, and Doings paſt finding out*, Rom. 11. 33. *His Foot-ſteps are not known*, Pſal. 77. 19. Yea, *He doth great things, and unſearchable and marvellous things without number*, Job 5. 9. till there be no number. If Creatures could do great things, and marvellous and unſearchable; yet you might ſoon reckon up all ſuch works of theirs, one great marvellous unſearchable thing were enough for the whole Creation; But God doth *great things and unſearchable, yea marvellous things without number.* His wayes are not as Mans wayes,

wayes, *as far as the Heavens are higher then the Earth*, ſo far are his wayes above the wayes of man, *Iſa.* 55. 8, 9. No wayes like his; *Among all the Gods, there is none like unto him; neither are there any Works like unto his Works*, Pſal. 86. 8. Whether you conſider the matter of his Works, and the Works themſelves, or his manner of Working.

1. His Works themſelves, and therein I ſhall (paſs by his internal Works, both perſonal and effectual, and) mention only his external Works.

1. He is incomparable in what Works *he is pleaſed to do, or hath done.*

1. *Creation*, Herein he is incomparable: *Creatura non poteſt creare*, The Creature cannot create; *Ex nihilo nihil fit* with them: Man may do ſomething towards the emendation of the form, but he cannot produce matter, no nor mend it when 'tis before him. A *Goldſmith* may make a ſparkling Jewel, but then you muſt give him Gold and pretious Stones to make it of; he can put the matter into a better form, but he is ſo far from making matter where there is none, that he cannot mend the matter which you

you give him: He cannot make Gold of Silver, nor Diamonds of common Stones. Man's work may exceed the matter, but man's work cannot make the matter exceed it self. But God can not onely make the matter to exceed it self, (as in man, who is formed of the Dust of the Earth, he hath such curious Parts, Veins, Sinews, Arteries, &c. such Members, Eyes, Cheeks, Ears, &c. Such Characters of Beauty in the whole, that he looks nothing like his Parent Earth, the matter of which he was made,) but also make matter: He hath brought something, nay all things out of nothing. All the Angels and Men cannot create one grain of Corn, one pile of Grass, one mote of Dust; but the great God hath erected the stately Fabrick of Heaven and the Earth, with the curious steps and stories thereof, and the various Creatures and Furniture therein, of nothing. Hereby he proves himself the true God, *The living God that made Heaven and Earth, & all things therein*, Act. 14. 15. He proves his Deity hereby, *Jer.* 10. 10, 11, 12. *The gods that have not made the Heavens and the Earth, shall perish from the Earth, and from*

from under the Heavens: He hath made the Earth by his Power, He hath eſtabliſhed the World by his Wiſdom, and *ſtretched out the Heavens by his diſcretion*; i. e. Can you be ſo fooliſh and ſottiſh, as to imagine that blind, dumb, deaf, dead Idols can compare with him, who created you, and all things beſide. When God would proclaim his Soveraignty, and incomparable Excellency, he challengeth *Job*, *Where waſt thou, when I laid the Foundations of the Earth? declare, if thou haſt underſtanding: Who hath laid the meaſures thereof, or ſtretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the Foundations thereof ſet? or who laid the corner-ſtone thereof?* Job 38. 4, 5. God would here denote the exactneſs and acurateneſs of his Works, and ſo he alludes to men, who when they would ſet up a ſtrong, ſtately, neat, compact Dwelling, lay the Foundations and corner Stones, and all the reſt by line and meaſure: But that which God would principally intimate here, is his own Omnipotency, and mans Impotency: *Where waſt thou, when I laid the Foundations of the Earth? &c.* Didſt thou then lend me an helping-Head how

to

to do it, or an helping-Hand in the doing of it? Surely No, I did all my ſelf. Thoſe innumerable Beings which are on Earth, and in the Ocean; yea, that are included within the vaſt Circumference of the higheſt Heavens, are all made by him out of nothing: *Through Faith we believe that the Worlds were made by the Word of God, ſo that things which are ſeen were not made of things that do appear*, Heb. 11. 3. The great God had no materials to make the great Houſe with, he did not frame it of his own Eſſence, or any pre-exiſtent matter, *Iſa.* 45. 12. Yet ſuch admirable qualities are every where intermixt, matter and form, ſubject and and accidents, power and goodneſs, wiſdom and order; a rare ſymmetry, exact proportion, and beauty in the whole; a dependent ſubordination, and uſeful ſubſerviency, in every part ſo equally poiz'd, that it's hard to determine which bears the greateſt weight in the mighty work, and gives abundant cauſe to cry out with the *Pſalmiſt*, *O Lord, how marvellous are thy Works! in Wiſdom haſt thou made them all*, Pſal. 104. 24.

2. He

2. He is incomparable in regard of *Providence*: 1. For *Preservation* none is like him, nay, none beside him doth this; *O thou Preserver of Men*, Job 7. 20. *Thy Visitation preserveth my Spirit*, Job 10. 12. God is unlike to Men; The Carpenters or Masons build Houses, and then leave them to the care and charge of others; but God keeps up what he sets up. His Providence succeedeth Creation, and is indeed a continual Creation: *Thou preservest Man and Beast*, Psal. 36. 6. Not Food, or Air, or Sleep, but *Thou preservest Man and Beast*: And not onely Men and Beasts, but *all things subsist by him*, Colos. 1. 17. That Hand alone which made all, can maintain all; and that Power onely which produced out of nothing, must preserve from nothing; *Acts* 17. 28. *In him we live, and move, and have our beings.* That Being which gave us our Beings, must uphold us in our Beings; Heb. 1. 3. *He upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power*, 1. *Sustinendo*, As a *Pillar*, or sure Foundation, upon which they stand. The Air which surrounds the Earth and Ocean, cannot bear a Feather, yet in it hangeth the massy weight of

of Earth and Sea: Job 26. 7. *He hangeth the Earth* (*i. e.* Earth and Sea, the terrestrial Globe,) *upon nothing*: His Power is the only Pillar that bears them up. 2. *Influendo*, As a *Fountain* from which they derive all their virtue and operations: The beings and motions of all his Creatures depend wholly upon his concurrence. If he suspend his Influence *Coëtum secundum*, according to the School-men, the Fire will not burn, *Dan.* 3. 27. Neither can the best Eyes see, though the faculty be well disposed, and the object be coloured, and at a good distance, *Gen.* 19. 7. as hath been hinted before. It's natural to the Sun to run his Race strongly and swiftly; yet if he doth not concur as swift as the Sun is, he cannot creep a Snails pace; he standeth still in *Giboah*, *Joshua* 10. 13. *Job.* 9. 7. 3. *Constringendo*, As a *Soveraign Bond and Ligature*, by which the parts of all things hold together, and are kept as water in a Vessel, from flowing abroad to their dissolution. No Man, no Angel, can bear its own weight, much less the weight of another Creature: Every Creature is like a Glass without a bot-

tom, which cannot ſtand alone, but muſt alwayes be in hand.

It's impoſſible for the Creation, or any part of it, to bear up a moment, if God ſhould forget it, and deny his actual concurrence to it. It doth conſtantly depend on God, as the Figure of the Seal imprinted on the Water, which being with-drawn, the impreſſion is inſtantly defaced. God is to the World, as the Soul to the Body, which alone can actuate and move it, without which it cannot ſtir at all, but is as a dead Corps.

2. For *Gubernation*, He governeth all, and neither Men nor Angels can govern themſelves. The great Family of the World would ſoon loſe its beauty; yea its being, if he did not maintain its harmony and concord, by guiding them in their motions, keeping them in their ſeveral ſtations, and directing them to their ends: *The Lord hath eſtabliſhed his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all*, Pſal. 103. 19. One Creature would moſt cruelly devour another; Beaſts would prey on Men: All Creatures would become their own Enemies and Executioners; The whole Earth

Earth would be turn'd into an *Acheldama*, and a *Golgatha*, a Field of Bloud, and Place of Skulls; yea, into an Hell, if he did not order, and guide, and govern all. Treasons, Incest, Slaughters, Parricides, would over-whelm the whole World, pervert the order of Nature, turn all into Confusion and Destruction; if he did not keep the Reins in his own Hands, and govern all things, in every of their actions, every moment.

He governeth *the highest*, even the Governors themselves on Earth, that seem to be above all Government: Kings and Princes seem to be absolute, and wholly at their own disposal; *Who may say to a King, What dost thou?* Many will tell us, That their Hands are their own, to do what they please; but more will acknowledge, that their Hearts are their own, to think as they please. But alas, they cannot command their Hands to do what they will, their Hands are ruled & overruled by him, *Act.* 4. 28. Herod *and* Pontius Pilate *were gathered together, to do what thy Hand determined to be done.* In like manner, their Hearts are not in their own Hands, to think as they will, but in God's

Hand, to think what he will: *The Heart of the King is in the Hand of the Lord, and he turneth it as the Rivers of Water, which way he pleaſeth*, Prov. 21. 1. As the Huſbandman turneth the Sluces into his Ground, this way, or that way, into this Channel or that Channel, as he thinks beſt for his own advantage; ſo God turneth the Hearts of Kings this way or that way, which way he ſeeth moſt for his Glory: Prov. 16. 9. *A mans heart deviſeth his way, but the Lord directeth his ſteps.* No man is Maſter of himſelf, ſo much as of his Thoughts; that Heart that deviſeth its way, is directed in thoſe devices by God. The Sun is higher then an earthly Prince, and ſeems to be his own guide; he acteth naturally, and ſo neceſſarily: *But if he ſpeak to the Sun, it riſeth not; and he ſealeth up the Stars*, Job 9. 9. He hath a Negative Voice upon the motions of all Beings.

He governeth the *loweſt* as well as the higheſt: As none are ſo high, as to be above his Precepts; ſo none are ſo low, as to be below his Providence: The higheſt muſt remember him, and he doth not

not forget the loweſt; *Are not two Sparrows ſold for a Farthing, yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Fathers providence*, Math. 10. 29. Sparrows ſeem to fly at liberty, and to fall caſually; but even their flight is directed by God, and their fall ordered by him: They neither fly nor fall accidentally, but providentially.

He governeth the moſt *ſtubborn Creatures*, thoſe which ſeem wholly ungovernable: The *Winds*, the *high Winds*, *Whirle-Winds* ſeem to caſt off and ſcorn all Rule and Government; but theſe Winds are at his will: *Stormy-Winds fulfil his Word*, Pſal. 148. 8. When they ruſh forth with ſuch irreſiſtable force, that neither Men, nor Trees, nor Horſes can ſtand before them; He *rideth on their Wings*, and hath them more at command then a ſkilful Rider hath an Horſe, to turn this way, or that way, at his pleaſure, *Pſal.* 104. 3. *Pſal.* 18. 10. They are all at his beck: He *cauſeth them to blow*, Pſal. 147. 18. And ceaſeth them, *Matth.* 8. 26. The wiſe man tells us, *He hath them in his fiſt*, Prov. 30. 4. He can hold

them fast, or let them loose, as a man, what he hath in his fist.

The *Waves* seem rougher then the Winds: The Waters are moist Bodies, that are with much difficulty contained in their own bounds, especially when the Winds cross them, & contend with them; but *he sitteth on the Floods*, Psal. 29. 11. As a Prince on his Throne, enjoyning and forcing Obedience and Submission: *He bindeth the Waters in a Garment*, Prov. 30. 4. As Women their sucking Infants in Mantles, with swadling-Bands, which they cannot get out of; though the Sea be such a Giant, such a Monster, that it swalloweth up thousands, and burieth them in its Belly, that it maketh all to shake and tremble, when it roareth and rageth; yet to God, it's but a little Infant, which he ordereth as he pleaseth, and can lay to sleep, or make quiet in an instant, when it's never so tempestuous: *When I made the Cloud the Garment thereof, and thick Darkness its Swadling-Band*, Job 38. 9. Some earthly Princes heated with Passion, and drunk with Pride, have cast Shackles into the Sea, threatning it with bondage, if he did not obey them.

Xerxes

Xerxes commanded ſo many ſtrokes to be given the Sea, as a Puniſhment of its Rebellion againſt his will; but ſuch actions are the higheſt folly and madneſs. Many have had great Command at Sea, but none ever had the Command of the Sea, ſave God. As tempeſtuous and outragious as it is, it's his quiet Priſoner, and ſtirs not without his leave, nor otherwiſe then he lengthens its Chain: *I ſet Bars and Doors, and ſaid, Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no farther, and here ſhall thy proud Waves be ſtay'd,* Job 38. 10, 11.

It may eaſily be proved, that the Sea is higher then the Earth, and why then doth it not over-flow it, and drown its Inhabitants? ſurely no reaſon can be given, but the Command the great God hath over it; Pſal. 104. 6, 7, 8, 9. *The Waters ſtood above the Mountains; At thy rebuke they fled, at the Voice of thy Thunder they haſted away: They go up by the Mountains, they go down by the Vallies, unto the place which thou haſt founded for them: Thou haſt ſet a bound, that they may not paſs over; that they turn not again to cover the Earth.* The Waters did once cover

the Earth, till God broke up for them his decreed place, *Job* 38. 10. And commanded them into their appointed Channels. They have a propensity and inclination still to cover the Earth again: What doth their constant beating upon their Banks with rage and fury, and now and then encroaching upon the Earth, and getting ground of it signifie? but their desire and longing to beat down all before them, and turn the dry Land into a Sea. The onely reason why they do not accomplish their ends, is, because the great Governor of the World hath set them their bounds, which they cannot pass.

Some men are extream stubborn and refractory, as immoveable as Rocks, resolved and fixt for their own Wills and Wayes; but even these God ordereth at his pleasure. The King of *Babylon* seem'd an untameable Beast, he had forraged many Countries and Kingdoms, and trampled on many Idols and false gods; and he cometh in a full career against the People of God, like a Lion greedy of his prey, no way doubting but to tear them in pieces, and devour them, as you may

read

read in 37. and 38. Chapters of *Isaiah*. But mark how God governs this wild Ass, and hath this Monster at command, Isa. 38. 29. *I will put my Hook into thy Nose, and my Bridle in thy Lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. I will put my Hook into thy Nose*, an allusion either to a Fisher, when he hath the Fish fast on his Hook, draweth it which way he will, *Job* 41. 1. Or to such Rings as men put into the Noses of Bears to keep them in, and govern them with: *My Bridle into thy Lips*, my Bit in thy Mouth, and my Curb about thy Jaws, an allusion to them that ride Horses, who with Bridle and Bit, rein and restrain them, and keep them within compass, *Psal.* 32. 9. *James* 3. 3. As if God had said, because thou ravest and rageſt like some huge unruly Fish, or some fierce wild Beast, I will take thee with my Hook, and I will ring thee, and curb thee, and lead thee, and draw thee whither I list. Ezek. 19. 4. 9.

The Devils are more untractable then Winds, and Waves, and Men: They have great Power; hence called *The strong man*, Luke 11. 21. *And Powers*, Eph.

Eph. 6. 12. Their union doth much increaſe their ſtrength, *Vis unita fortior*: They are ſo much one in their Confederacies, and all their Conſpiracies, that they are called *The evil One*, *The wicked One*, Matth. 13. 28. *The Devil*, 1 Peter 5. 8. Becauſe though they are many thouſands, yet they agree and unite againſt God, as if they were all but one. They have much knowledge, ſubtilty, and policy, to direct their Power, *Vis conſilii expers*, *&c.* Their excellent Natures, their great Obſervation of Perſons and Actions; their long experience of ſome thouſands of years in the World, muſt needs ſpeak their Wiſdom, or rather Craftineſs, to be great.

Add to theſe, their innate implacable hatred of God, which makes them imploy all their Power, and improve all their Policy to offend and diſpleaſe him, to break from under his Yoke and Subjection; yet in ſpight of all their Might, their Craft, their Malice, he governeth them as a man doth his Priſoners, whom he hath in Fetters: *He hath reſerved them in Chains of Darkneſs*, Jude verſe 6. He hath them ever in the Chains, 1. Of

their

their own terrifying affrighting Consciences, which allow them no rest Day or Night: Indeed, all time is a dark dreadful time to them, and all places are dark dismal places to them; they are whereever they go as Prisoners with Fetters upon them, yea such Shackels as enter into and pierce their Spirits in Chains of Darkness. 2. In Chains of Divine Providence: God governeth their Persons, and all their motions; they go no whither but as he pleaseth, though they go up and down in the Earth. As subtile a Spirit as the Devil is, he cannot touch *Job*, Job 1. 12. No, nor the Swine without God's leave, *Matth.* 8. 31. He that would read more of the incomparableness of God in his Providence, may see it incomparably set forth by God's own Mouth, in the 37, 38, 39, 40, 41. Chapters of *Job*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

God incomparable in the Work of Redemption; He can do all things.

3. HE is incomparable in the *Work of Redemption:* And truly, this Work is his Maſter-piece, pure Workmanſhip; and indeed all his Works of Creation and Providence are ſubordinate to this: All his Attributes ſparkle moſt gloriouſly in this, *Pſal.* 102. 16. All his Angels in Heaven admire and adore him for this, *Revel.* 4. 10, 11. This is the Work of all his Works, which he is ſo mightily pleaſed with, and reapeth ſo much Glory and Praiſe from, *Iſa.* 42. 1. *Iſa.* 43. 21. No Angels, no Men, no not all together, could with all their united Worthineſs redeem one Soul: *None of them can redeem his Brother, or give to God a Ranſome for him: For the Redemption of the Soul is precious, it ceaſeth for ever,* Pſal. 49. 9, 10.

None beſide God had *pitty* enough for mans miſery, or *Wiſdom* enough to find out a Remedy, or *Power* enough for his Recovery. None

None had *pity* enough for mans Misery; Boundless Misery call'd for boundless Mercy; One deep for another: But where is such Mercy to be found among the Creatures? Man was a *Child of Wrath*, had plunged himself into an Ocean of Evils and Fury, and this requited an Ocean of Love and Pity, but Creatures at most had but drops; but the Creator had infinite Grace for infinite Guilt, and infinite Mercy for infinite Misery, *Ezek.* 16. 5, 6, 7, 8. *In the day of thy Nativity, thou wast cast out, to the loathing of thy Person; thy Navel was not cut, neither wast thou salted with Salt, nor washed with Water.* Here is misery indeed, but what help or compassion from Creatures? truly none: *No Eye pitied thee, to do any of these things unto thee;* (who then had pity enough?) *Then I passed by thee, and saw thee in thy Blood; Then was my time of Love, and I bid thee live; yea, when thou wast in thy Blood, I said unto thee live.* God hath *great Mercy* for great Misery, Eph. 2. 4, 5. *Abundant Mercy* for abundant Misery, 1 *Peter* 1. 3. A Plaister altogether as broad and as large as the Sore, *John* 3. 16. 1 *John* 4. 9. *Eph.* 3. 19.

There-

Therefore the Holy Ghost observeth, *Luke* 1.7,8. In the Work of Redemption, the *tender Mercy of our God from on high hath visited us.*

None had *Wisdom* enough to find out a Remedy: Had the Creatures had pity enough, and kindness enough, they had not wisdom enough to make Justice and Mercy meet together, and Righteousness and Grace kiss each other. If God should have offered Man his Pardon and Life, upon Condition, that he with Angels should consult, and find out some way to satisfie his infinite Justice, that was offended by Sin; Alas, poor man must of necessity have perished; what Creature was able to undertake the satisfaction of infinite Justice? It would have Bankrupt them all to satisfie for one of the smallest Sins. And who could have thought of God, the Creator to undertake it? who durst have presumed to entertain such a motion in his Heart? Could it have entered into the mind of Men or Angels, that the Law might be fulfilled in its Commands and Curse, the Glory of Divine Justice and Holiness salved, and miserable man eternally saved.

No

No Creature would have thought of a way to reconcile the Justice and Mercy of God, no Creature could have thought of any way for it; nay, no Creature durst have thought of such a way as God hath found out. No, He that made the World by his Wisdom, *Psal.* 104. 24. when it had unmade it self; new made it by his Wisdom: Hence the Redemption of man is called πολυποίκιλος σοφία, the *manifold*, the *curious*, the embroydered Wisdom of God; such Wisdom as passed the Knowledge of Angels, *Ephes.* 3. 10. And the Redeemer is called *The Wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 24. In this Work is infinite Wisdom, because in this Work infinite Justice and infinite Mercy do meet, *Rom.* 3. 24, 25. *Ephes.* 2. 5, 7. 1 *John* 4. 9, 10.

Again, None had *Power* to have gone through with the Work, if they had had Wisdom to have found out a way: There was so much to be done in order to mans Recovery, that it would have undone all the World, if they had undertaken it. The Powers of Hell must be over-come, the Curse of the Law,

and

and Wrath of the Law-Giver, must be born; Sin that was so strong and fast in the Heart of Man, must be subdued, Grace and Holiness, against which Man had an enmity, must be infused; and what Power less then Omnipotent could effect either of these? God who discover'd great Power in creating the World of nothing, discover'd much greater in redeeming the World when it was worse then nothing. In the former he had no opposition, in the latter, his Law, Justice, the Devils of Hell; nay, Man himself did resist and oppose him: It had been impossible for the Mediator to have born up, and held out under all those contests with the Powers of Darkness, the Malediction of the Law, the Fury of his Father, if the Almighty everlasting Arms had not been under him, *Isa.* 42. 1, 2. *Behold my Servant, whom I upheld*, Isa. 49. 8, 9. Therefore you read of Power, great Power, mighty Power, greatness of Power, exceeding greatness of Power, put forth in the Work of Redemption; Eph. 1. 19, 20. *And what is the exceeding greatness of his Power to us-ward? who believe according*

to

to the working of the mighty Power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. And the Redeemer is called *The Power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 24. *The Arm of the Lord*, Isa. 53. 1. His *Strength*, Isa. 27. 5. Once more we read, *Thy Redeemer is mighty, the Lord of Hosts is his Name*, Jer. 50. 34.

2. He is incomparable (not onely in what he hath done, but also) *in what he can do.* He can do what he will, nay he can do much more then he will do.

He can do *what he will*; His Arm is as large as his Mind, and his Hand equal to his Heart. His will and pleasure is the onely boundary of his Strength and Power: *Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in Heaven and Earth, and the Seas, and in all deep Places*, Psal. 135. 6. *Psal.* 115. 3. Can this be said of Men or Angels? Can they do what they please? surely No. But the Lord doth what he hath a mind to do: *He is of one mind, and who can turn him? and what his Soul desireth, that he doth*, Job 23. 13. His Heart onely can limit his Hands, and his Strength is determined by nothing but his will. It was the saying of a Prince,

that he could bear a Circle about his Head (meaning his Crown) but he could not bear a *Circle about his Feet*, he would go and come at his own pleasure, and do what he thought fit; but all the Princes in the World have Fetters about their Feet, and Chains about their Hands. They cannot go whither they please, *Isa.* 37. 33, 34. *Zenacherib* would needs go up to *Jerusalem*, and bringeth an Army against it for that end, but his Feet were fettered: *Thus saith the Lord concerning the King of* Assyria, *He shall not come into this City; by the way that he came, by the same shall he return.* Neither can they do what they please: As they go (not whither they will, but) whither God pleaseth; so they do (not what they will, but) what God pleaseth, *Acts* 4. 27, 28.

It's Gods incomparable Prerogative to go whither, and do what he will: God doth not do many things that he can, but he doth all things that he will: He can do more then he will. He cannot do what is sinful, he cannot lie, *Titus* 1, 2. He *cannot deny himself*, 1 Tim. 2. 13. He cannot do that which implyeth a con-

contradiction: He cannot make himself a Creature, or make a Creature a God, because the doing of these things speak weakness and imperfection, but whatsoever speaketh power or perfection, that he can do: *He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think*, Eph. 3. 20. A man may ask much, this World, the other World, a thousand Worlds after them, millions of Worlds after those, better Worlds, greater Worlds; the Soveraignty and Dominion over them; the Command and Rule of them for Ages, for Generations, for ever: A man may conceive more then he can ask, the Mind of Man is much larger then his Tongue: His apprehension doth far exceed his expressions, especially of such a man whose mind is enlightned and enlarged, (for of such the Apostle speaks) and not contracted and narrowed to sublunary sensual Objects: But God *can do more then we are able to ask or think*, yea *abundantly more*; so much more, that we cannot think how much more; nay, *exceeding abundantly* more ὑπὲρ ἐκ περισσοῦ, *valde abundanter*, above abundance.

Is any thing impossible to God, *Luke* 1. 37. *With God all things are possible*, Math. 19. 26. He is good at every thing that is good: Men are good, some at one thing, some at another thing, so are Angels; but no Man, no Angel, is good at all things; God only can do every thing, as God only can be every thing: He only that is universal in his Being, is universal in his doings. He can make millions of Worlds in a moment, and unmake them again as soon: He can kill and make alive in the twinkling of an Eye; He can build up, and pluck down, take Nature off its Hinges, and set it on again; make the Waters when they run never so violently, to stand still; stop the Sun in its full career; keep the hottest Fire from burning, or so much as singing an Hair. *Shall the Sun go backward* (saith he) *ten degrees or forward*, 2 Kings 20. 9, 10. Take either, it's all one to me; chuse which thou likest best: To me both are equally easie.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

God incomparable in the manner of his Working: He worketh irresistibly, arbitrarily.

2. IF you consider the *manner* of his Working, He is incomparable therein also.

1. He worketh *irresistibly*: He worketh so, as none can hinder him: All the united Wisdom, Power of Men, of Angels, cannot stop him at his Work. The mighty King *Nebuchadnezzar* was taught this Truth, when he was grazing among the Beasts, *Dan.* 4. 35. *He doth according to his will in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can stay his Hand.* Mark, He doth what he will, and none can stay his Hand; the Prayers of his People have sometimes stay'd his Hand, when he was going to slay and destroy, but it was because out of his Grace he stay'd it himself. Alas, what Creature can see, or know, or reach his Hand, that is invisible and omnipresent, Isa. 48. 10. *My Counsel shall*

ſtand, and I will do all my Pleaſure. The Counſels of Men do not alwayes ſtand, he makes them to fail and fall: *He bringeth the Counſels of the Heathen to naught, and maketh the Devices of the People of none effect*, Pſal. 33. 10 But none can make his Counſel void, or his Devices invalid.

What he will do he doth, and there is no withſtanding him: If he will bring an Enemy againſt a Nation, none can prevent their coming: *Calling the Ravenous Bird from the Eaſt, the Man that executeth my Counſel from a far Country,* (*Cyrus* that ſhould ſeiſe on *Babylon*, as a Ravenous Bird on his Prey) *yea, I have ſpoken it, and I will bring it to paſs*; (Let me ſee who ſhall hinder it,) *I have purpoſed it, and I will do it.* I would ſee who dares undertake to oppoſe it, *Iſa.* 40. 11, 12.

If he will deprive Men of their Honours and Grandeur, of their Eſtates and Treaſures, of their Might and Power, there is no contending with him, it muſt be done; Job 9. 4, 12. *Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him?* If he will take away, nothing ſhall ſtand in his way.

way. The four great ſtrong Monarchies of the World, that ſucceſſively were the dread and terrour of the Earth, were taken away by him, and who hindered him? All their Policy and Power could not prevent him, or hinder their Ruine, *Dan.* 2. 44.

God hath a *Negative Voice* upon the motions of all the Creatures: *Who is he that ſaith, and it cometh to paſs, if the Lord commandeth it not?* Lament. 3. 27. They who reckon without him, muſt reckon again: They muſt aſk his leave, as well as have his aſſiſtance, or ſit ſtill and do nothing. Their Wheels, though never ſo well oyl'd, ſtand ſtill, or go backward, if he ſay Nay, to their motion forward; *He ſpeaketh to the Sun, and it riſeth not, and ſealeth up the Stars,* Job 9. 7. No day, not the leaſt light in the Heavens at night without his leave; but no Creature hath a Negative Voice upon the leaſt of his Actions: What he will do he doth, and never aſketh Men or Angels leave. Nay, challengeth them to hinder him if they can, Iſa. 43. 13. *I will Work, who ſhall let it?* Obſerve his Reſolution, *I will Work*; He ſpeaks like

one in Authority, that is above all Checks and Controls, that can make good what he purposeth in spight of all opposition; *I will Work*; Observe also his Challenge, *who shall let it?* Would I could see the Man, the Angel, that durst stand in the way of my motions. The Jews might think *Babylon* will let: *I* (saith God) *have sent to* Babylon, *and destroyed all their Princes, I have broken in pieces those Iron Bars*; There is no fear that they should hinder my entrance into their City.

He can give a *Supersedeas* to the highest Attempts, and strongest Designs of Creatures: He can blow on them, and they are soon blasted, all their politick Conceptions prove abortive: *Take Counsel together, and it shall come to nought*, Isa. 8. 10. Their most powerful Engins prove ineffectual, Verse 9. *Gird your selves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.* Some of them talked at a great, at a high rate; *We will go up against* Judas *and destroy it, and set a King in the midst thereof, even the Son of* Tabeal; But they speak beyond their strength, and *reckon* (as we say) *without their Host: Thus saith the*

the Lord God, It ſhall not ſtand, neither ſhall it come to paſs, Iſa. 7. 6, 7. But none can give a *Superſedeas* to the leaſt of his Attempts: *Behold he breaketh down, and it cannot be built up again; he ſhutteth up a Man, and there can be no opening*, Job 12. 14.

2. He worketh *arbitrarily*, according to his own will: He doth what he will, and he alone may do what he will. It is argued by many, that ſome Princes are not accountable for what they do to any Men, but all hold they are accountable to God. They are his Stewards and Deputies, and muſt give an account to him of their Stewardſhips. They are his Creatures, and are, or ought to be, limited by his Laws, and ſo muſt be reſponſible to him for their Carriages and Government. No King is abſolute or arbitrary in his Governments, becauſe all Kings are his Subjects, and owe Allegiance to His Majeſty, and Obedience to his Commands: But God is abſolute and arbitrary, and may do what he will do; every thing that he doth is juſt, becauſe he doth it: *He doth what he will in Heaven and Earth, and none can ſay unto him, what*

what dost thou? Dan. 4. 35. He is responsible to none for any of his Actions; none may question him, much less quarrel with him for what he doth: Angels are far from being arbitrary, His will, not their own, is their Rule, *Psal.* 103. 20. *Ye Ministers of his, that do his Pleasure.* He onely that is above all Law, is above all Transgression, 1 *John* 4. 3. And he whose will is the onely Rule of Rectitude and Righteousness, may well do what he will, *Rom.* 12. 2.

He hath an *absolute illimited Propriety in all the Works of his Hands*: He is the great Proprietor of all the World, and therefore may dispose of all at his pleasure, *Psal.* 24. 1. *Matth.* 20. 13, 15. *May I not do what I will with mine own? Friend, I do thee no wrong*; Though men may have a civil Right to their Estates, and a natural Right to themselves and their Children; yet the Original in all is still God's: He divests himself of nothing, by lending any thing to us, or trusting us with it; and therefore he may use what is his own, at his own liberty and pleasure, and none may question or quarrel with him for it.

Again, He is *supreme*, and so above all answer-

answering, or accounting for any thing he doth: He is the *most high*, *Psal.* 92. 1. It's no disparagement to Men or Angels to be under a Law; nay, 'tis essential to them as they are Creatures: But he that is Supreme, and giveth all Laws to others, is under no Law himself: Indeed, if he had a Superior, he might be called to account by him: But *why strivest thou against him? he giveth no account of any of his matters*, Job 33. 13. *Why strivest thou against him?* Not by open force, but secret murmurings, and logical arguings, against his providential Dispensations; It's vain, *for he giveth no account of any of his matters.* He is not bound to tell thee what he doth, or why he doth it: He hath received nothing from thee, and so not bound to account to thee, *Rom.* 11. 35. Thou hast no Authority to call him to account; what Man or Angel hath Power to call him to account? In the next Chapter the Holy Ghost doth fully speak for our purpose, Job 34. 10, 12, 13. *Far be it from God, that he should do wickedly; and from the Almighty, that he should pervert Judgment: Who hath given him a Charge of the Earth?* Whose Deputy is he in the Government

vernment of the World? If he be a Deputy or Vice-Roy to any Superior Power, then he must keep close to the Instructions, and act according to the Commission he receiveth from them, or be accountable for his wandrings and deviations; But *who hath given him a Charge over the Earth?* What Man? what Angel? where is he? what or who is he that hath given him a charge? If there were one higher then God to give him a Rule, then if he swerved from it, he was faulty; but because he is higher then the higest of Beings, and his own Law, therefore he may do what he will without blame: *Who hath enjoyned him his way? or can say unto God, Thou hast wrought Iniquity?* Job 36. 23. God's way is his method of Working, his manner of governing the World: Now saith the Holy Ghost, Who hath any authority over him, to injoyn him his way of working, the Path in which he should walk, that in case he stept aside, he might say unto him, *Thou hast wrought Iniquity?* No, not any; and therefore its desperate presumption for any to complain of him what ever he doth: *Who art thou that replyest*

replyest against God? Rom. 9. 20. He is a bold Man indeed that will contend with his Maker; Who art thou? what manner of Man? what monster of Men? Who art thou, a clod of Clay, a lump of Earth, a sink of Sin, a fire-brand of Hell, that thou darest chop Logick with God? For shame set still, lay thy Hand on thy Mouth, and be silent.

CHAP. XIII.

God incomparable in his Working: He doth the greatest things with ease, and without any Help.

3. HE worketh at all times *without wearinesse*, and doth the greatest things *with ease*: As there is nothing *too hard* for God, so there is nothing *hard* to God: He doth the hardest things that are with the greatest ease. Indeed, the great God doth the greatest and hardest things with the same ease that he doth the least things: It's all one to him, whether his Work be small or great, easie or hard to others; all is easie alike to him. In

In the *Creation*, though the building be large and vaſt, yet with what eaſe did he ſet it up? He did not blow or ſweat, no nor ſo much as ſtir at his Work. The whole World conſiſteth of the cæleſtial and terreſtial Globe, and both were the product of *his Word*: For the Heavens, Pſal. 33.6. *By the word of the Lord the Heavens were made, and all the Hoſt thereof by the breath of his Mouth.* It was but a *word*, a *breath*, that produced that vaſt circumference of the Heavens, and all thoſe great Luminaries there: So for the Earth, *He ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt*, verſe 9. He onely ſpake the word, and even non-entities obey'd, and became Beings. Therefore in the ſtory of the Creation, *Gen.* 1. we find in every Days-work, God only commanding, and and immediately all things concurring, *verſe* 3, 9, 12.

In his Works of *Providence*, he doth all things with unconceiveable eaſe.

If he deſtroy and pull down, it is done with eaſe; *They are cruſhed as a Moth*, Job 4.19. How eaſily doth a Man cruſh a Moth between his Fingers? with more eaſe

eaſe doth God cruſh his ſtouteſt Enemies. He deſtroyeth the higheſt, the greateſt, the ſtrongeſt, the Lions, young Lions, with a breath, with a blaſt: *By the blaſt of God they periſh, by the breath of his Noſtrils they are conſumed*, Job 4. 9, 10. By a blaſt, a breath; it's eaſie to breath, to ſend forth a blaſt for a Man; but much eaſier for God, who breathed into Man the breath of Life: This can put him to no pain, no toil, no trouble at all. *Zenacherib* comes againſt *Jeruſalem* with a great Army of Warriers, and had, as he ſaith, *Counſel and Strength for War*: God undertakes to deal with him on the behalf of his own People, and to deſtroy him; but ſee with what eaſe God doth it, 2 Kings 19.17. *I will ſend a blaſt upon him: I will never trouble my ſelf to uſe my Artillery, or draw out my great Ordnance of Heaven, my Thunders and Lightnings againſt ſo many thouſand Souldiers; I will onely blow upon them, that ſhall be all.*

He deſtroyeth with a *word*; If he do but ſpeak, it's done: His ſaying, is doing: *At what time I ſpeak concerning a Nation, to pull down, and to deſtroy*, Jer. 18.7,8.

When

When the Prophet would ſpeak the certain ruine of the *Philiſtins*, he doth it in this manner, *Woe to the Inhabitants of the Sea-coaſts, the Word of the Lord is againſt you*, Zeph. 2. 5. *i. e.* The caſe is woeful, your condition is deſperate, the whole World cannot ſave you; for the *Word of the Lord is againſt you.* Men may talk, and boaſt, and threaten what they will do, when all the while their Words are but Wind, and their threatned Folk live long; but the Word of God, like Lightning or Mildew, blaſteth where-ever it goes, and burns up to the very root. *Julius Cæſar* told *Metellus*, (when he would have prevented his robbing the *Roman* Treaſury,) *Young Man be quiet, or I'le lay thee dead at my Feet*: And then to magnifie his own Power, addeth, *It is harder for me to ſpeak it, then to do it.* But this is certain, it's as eaſie for God to do any thing, as to ſpeak of it; yea, he doth what he will with a Word. Now how eaſie is it to ſpeak? He deſtroyeth with a *Look*, with a glance of his Eye; and ſurely that is eaſie to him that is all Eye, that made the Eye: *In the Morning-Watch the Lord looked*

looked through the Pillar of Fire on the Host of the Egyptians, *and troubled them*, Exod. 14. 24. He darts out beams of Death from his Eyes! One look from God will take away the life of the greatest of his Adversaries. He destroyeth with an *hiss*, O how little! how easie a thing is hissing! Isa. 7. 18. *I will hiss for the Flies of* Egypt, *and the Bees of* Assyria, *and they shall come*, &c.

He destroyeth with a *turn of his Hand*, Psal. 81. 13, 14. *I would soon have subdued their Enemies, and turned my Hand against them that hated them.* A turn of his Hand would have subdued the proudest Enemies of *Israel*, and have stab'd them to the Heart.

He delivereth his People with the greatest ease: Whatsoever their Straights be, though various and difficult, yet he helpeth them out with ease. When they were in Captivity, scatter'd up and down as Exiles out of their own Country, he bringeth them Home; but how? truly, *He saith to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back*, &c. Isa. 43. 6. And both hearken to his Word, That his *Sons come from far, and his Daughters from the*

ends of the Earth. When the Prophet would beg of him to help his afflicted People, he only desires him to *Command Deliverance for* Jacob, Psal. 44. 4. If he will it, and command it, the Work is done.

He succeedeth his Ordinances, and maketh them effectual, for enlightning the Blind, and enlivening the Dead (great Works) with ease: He saith, *Live*, and the dead Sinner liveth, *John* 5. 24. He commandeth success, and Ordinances are effectual: *There the Lord commandeth his Blessing, even life for evermore*, Psal. 133. 3.

Yea, the Ocean, that is such a frightful Monster, which makes such an horrible Noise, and openeth its Mouth, roaring and raging, as if it would certainly devour us, is quell'd and quieted with ease by him, *Job* 38. 8, 9, 10, 11. When the Sea was tempestuous, and frighted the Disciples, that they awake the Lord Jesus; with what ease doth he cause a Calm, *Peace, be still*, Matth. 8. 27. (As a Mother would still a crying-Child, *Hush, be quiet, peace, no more, be still,*) and *immediately there was a Calm.*

4. He

4. He worketh wholly *by his own Power*, without the leaſt help from any other: Creatures are all Inſtruments, and act in the vertue of the principal Efficient. Angels and Men act not in their own, but in the ſtrength of God; they have not ſome help from God, but all the Power by which they work, from God: But God acteth wholly in his own ſtrength, he never had, nor deſired an helping-hand from any of his Creatures.

In the Work of Creation, he erected this curious large Fabrick without any Tool or Inſtrument, Iſa. 44. 24. *I am the Lord that made all things, that ſtretcheth forth the Heavens alone, that ſpreadeth abroad the Earth by my ſelf.* Mark, he made the Heavens *alone*, had none with him to aſſiſt him; and he made the Earth *by himſelf*, call'd none from Heaven to his Aid. As he ſaid to *Job*, *Where waſt thou when I laid the Foundations of the Earth? declare, if thou haſt underſtanding*, Job 38. 4. Thou waſt far enough off from giving any help; ſo he may ſay to Angels, *Where were ye when I ſtretched out the Heavens? declare, if ye have underſtanding.*

derstanding. Some give that reason why they are not mentioned in the Creation of the World, in the first of *Genesis*, to assure us, that God did not use their help in his Work. The Heavens are compared to a *Curtain*, *Psal.* 104. and to a *Tent*, Isa. 40. 22. Now we know that when Curtains or Tents that are very large, are to be *stretcht out*, as the phrase is in that, *Isa.* 44. 24. there needs many Hands to it, one hand will not do it, many pair of hands must be put to it; but God spreadeth out those wide large Curtains of Heaven alone, *Job* 9. 8. He borrowed not one hand to it: *Hast thou with him spread out the Skie, which is strong as a molten Looking-Glass*, Job 37. 18. Was God beholden to thee for affording him thine Arms in the unfolding and spreading that broad vast piece.

In works of *Providence*, He doth some great things alone by himself; *Job* 26. 7. *He hangeth the Earth on nothing*, without an *Atlas* to bear it up; and he preserves *Moses* forty days without Food, *Exod.* 34. 28. And he doth all things without the help of his Creatures, even there, and

then

then when he makes the moſt uſe of his Creatures. He uſeth Angels and Men in the Government of the World; he uſeth many means, as Food and Rayment, and Phyſick and Sleep, for the preſervation of our Health and Lives; but he doth all, as much and as ſurely as if he made not uſe of any means at all. He is the Soul of the World, that actuates every thing in it: Hence we read, That Inſtruments are called *his Sword*; Pſal. 17. 14. *His Rod*, Iſa. 10. 5. What can the Sword or the Rod do, without an Hand to cut or ſcourge with them; therefore when his *Rod* boaſteth as if it could ſcourge of it ſelf, *Iſa.* 10. 12, 13. and as if it were the *Hand* too; *By the ſtrength of my hand have I done it; I have removed the Bounds of the People, and robbed their Treaſure.* God quickly contradicts ſuch vain babling, and confutes ſuch vain glorious boaſting, verſe 15. *Shall the Axe boaſt it ſelf againſt him that heweth therewith, or the Saw magnifie it ſelf againſt him that ſhaketh it?* Thou poor proud vain-glorious Wretch, Thou art a meer *Axe*, a *Saw*, and canſt no more move or cut of thy ſelf, then a Saw or an

Axe that lyeth on the ground, which no man medleth with: Thou talketh arrogantly and saucily, as if thou didst all, when thou didst nothing: I did all, thou wast all the while but the Axe and Saw in my Hand, which I made use of.

1. Whether God have little or great means, means or no means, it's all one to him; there is not a pinn to choose, as we say, for he doth as much when he hath means, as when he hath none, *2 Chron.* 14.7. *It's all one with thee to help with many, or with them that have no Power.* It's not the least difference to him, 'tis not so much as the smallest dust in the Ballance to turn the Scale of Victory, whether God have many or few, any or none of his side.

God never made use of any Creatures, because he had the *least need* of them, or the *least help* by them, but partly because it is *his pleasure*; he useth them because he will use them: *It's his pleasure by the foolishness of Preaching, to save them that believe*, 1 Cor. 1, 21. Not that he hath the least aid from Preachers; so it's his pleasure by Food and Sleep to preserve mans life; not that he hath any help from them:

them: *Thy Visitation preserveth my Spirit*, Job 10. 12. Partly from his *own Honour*. Hereby he magnifieth his *Sovereignty*, and sheweth his Dominion over all his Creatures, that they are all at his beck, and he can with a stamp of his Foot, or a glance of his Eye, or an hiss of his Mouth, call them from the uttermost parts of the World, to execute his Command. *My Hand hath laid the Foundations of the Earth, my right Hand hath span'd the Heavens; when I call, they stand up together*, Isa. 48. 13. The Flies, Caterpillars, Locusts, Stars in their courses, &c. all come at his call. Hereby he magnifieth his *Power*, that can do such great things by weak means: He got himself glory on *Pharaoh*, when he made pitiful contemptible Creatures, as Lice and Flies, such Plagues to him.

And by opening the Eyes of the blind, and quickening the Dead, by such weak poor Instruments as Men are, his *strength* is exceedingly exalted; *We have this Treasure in earthen Vessels, that the excellency of the Power might be of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 7. Hereby he magnifieth his *Wisdom viz.* in discovering the fitness and apti-

tude of his Creature to those ends and purposes for which they were created. The use of a Tool discovers its worth, by discovering its serviceableness to that for which it was made. Partly to *endear Creatures* one to another; their mutual serviceableness each to other, causeth the greater amity and unity between them, 1 *Cor.* 12. 21, 22, 23.

In *spiritual things* also God worketh alone, even when he hath many Ordinances and Ministers to serve him: *Thou worke'st all our Works in us, and for us,* Isa. 26. 12. Not any Visions, or Prophets, or industry of our own; but *thou worke'st all. What is* Paul? *what is* Apollos? Paul *planteth*, Apollo *watereth*; *but God giveth the increase. So then* (Observe) *He that planteth is* (a great Apostle? No,) *nothing*, and he *that watereth is* (an eloquent excellent person? No,) *nothing*; but God *that giveth the increase*, 1 Cor. 3. 5, 6, 7. God doth not use Preachers, because they help him in the conversion of Souls, but (as I said before) because it is his pleasure, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. And he turneth it to his honour, 2 *Cor.* 4. 7. Therefore it is often seen, that

that Ministers of the largest Gifts, of the greatest Grace, are not often the most successful in their Labours; because God would have us know, that it's not the Parts or Piety of the Preacher, but his Grace and Spirit that doth the Work: They are nothing, he is all in all. He made light the first day of the Creation, and not the Sun or Stars till the Fourth, to tell the World, that he can enlighten it without the Sun. It is a great Honour to God that he hath so many millions of Creatures at his will and pleasure, that he hath so many Eyes to see for him, and so many Ears to hear for him, and so many Hands to work for him; but it is a greater Honour to him that he needeth none of them, He can do all without them; that though they are *serviceable* to him, yet they are not *necessary* to him. For God and all his Creatures do no more, can do no more then God without any of his Creatures.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

God is incomparable in his Word: He ſpeaketh with incomparable Authority, Condeſcenſion and Efficacy.

Fourthly, GOD is incomparable in his *Word*; He ſpeaketh after an unſpeakable manner, *Never man ſpake like him*, (no, nor Angel,) his Enemies themſelves being Judges, *John* 7.46. Men may ſpeak high, and ſpeak holily; Angels may ſpeak higher and holier, but neither ſpeak like God: *Behold he exalteth by his Power, who teacheth like him?* Job 36.22. Behold I wonder at it, he exalteth by his Power, is good at acting; *who teacheth like him?* Is good at inſtructing, and beſt at both, and beyond all that ever were. *Who teacheth like him?* The words are a Challenge to the whole World: Bring forth the Man, let me ſee the Angel, that can ſpeak or teach like God. He doth not not ſay, Who teacheth *beſide* God? There are many Teachers beſide God, the inanimate Creatures are Teachers, the Heavens by

by their constant regular motion, the Earth by its fecundity and fruitfulness, according to the law of their Creation, teach Man Obedience and Proficiency, *Isa.* 48. 13. The irrational Creatures are Teachers: Man is sent to School to the *Ant* and *Swallow*, and *Oxe* and *Ass*, to the Beasts of the Field, and the Fowles of the Air, to learn Providence and Prudence; to learn Wisdom, to discern and improve his Opportunities, and gratitude to his Father and Benefactor, *Prov.* 6. 6. *Jer.* 7. 7, & 8. *Isa.* 1. 5. *Job* 12. 8, 9. Men are Teachers one to another; Parents and Ministers do, or should, teach those that are committed to their Charge or Trust, *Prov.* 22. 6. *Ephes.* 4. 6. Angels are Teachers: The Angel taught *Daniel*, and helpt him to understand, *Dan.* 10. 14. And surely of all finite, they are the most learned and able Masters: But he saith, *Who teacheth like him?* Though many teach beside God, yet none teacheth like God; none speaketh like him, whether you consider the *manner*, the *matter*, or the *effect* of his Speech.

1. He

1. He is incomparable in the *manner* of his ſpeaking.

1. He ſpeaketh *authoritatively*, and in his own Name: Good Men and good Angels may command, but it muſt be (as ſubordinate Magiſtrates) in the Name and Authority of their Prince and Soveraign; but God commandeth in his *own Name* and Authority: God gives Authentity to what-ever he ſpeaks, and he ſpeaks with Authority when he ſpeaks. God ſpeaks as one that hath Right and Power to Command, and as one that, upon his own account, expecteth to be obeyed: *I am the Lord*, is enough to warrant Obedience to the whole Decalogue, *Thou ſhalt have no other God; Thou ſhalt not make to thy ſelf any graven Image, &c.* For *I am the Lord thy God.*

His Authority is the higheſt, the greateſt reaſon of any Precept, and the ſtrongeſt warrant for Obedience; Therefore *Thou ſhalt not ſwear by my Name falſly*, (why?) *I am the Lord: Thou ſhalt not curſe the Deaf, nor lay a ſtumbling block before the Blind*, (why not? the Deaf cannot hear if I do curſe them, nor the Blind ſee if I do lay a ſtumbling-block before them,)

them,) *I am the Lord, &c.* Levit. 19. 12. &c. It's said of Christ, *He taught as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes,* Matth. 7. ult. He did not *beg* attention, but *enjoyn* it; nor *beseech Obedience,* but *command* it. As when Princes Enact Laws, they do not intreat, but *require* Obedience at the peril of their Subjects. *This is the Word of the Lord,* and *Thus saith the Lord,* and *the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it,* is sufficient to awe and require Subjection from all that hear it. God is his own Authority, not so Men or Angels: They speak from God, but he from none but himself. His Word is a *Light,* Psal. 119. 104, 105. that discovers it self; And therefore it is called *The Testimony of the Lord,* Psal. 19. 7. Because it beareth witness to it self, and needeth not testimony from Men or Angels. What the essential Word speaketh, may be spoken of the declarative Word: It receiveth not Testimony from Man, *John* 5. 34. Men need Grounds and Reasons, and Witnesses too, to prove and vouch what they say to be true, and to be so as they speak; but the Word of God is a sufficient authentick Testimony to it self;

ſelf; It's his own Proof, becauſe what Truth it ſelf ſpeaks, muſt of neceſſity be true.

2. He ſpeaketh *condeſcendingly*, to the condition and underſtanding of thoſe to whom he ſpeaketh: He conſidereth the Natures and Tempers, and Capacities of his Hearers, and accordingly ſpeaks to them: He doth not (as ſome Miniſters) ſpeak in an *unknown Tongue*, or ſoar into the Clouds, exceed the Capacities of his Hearers, that he might be wondred at, not underſtood; but he obſerveth their Weakneſs and Infirmities, yea their dulneſs and incapacity, and teacheth them as they are able to bear him. There are *Depths* in his Word for Elephants to *ſwim* in, (to tell the World what and how he could ſpeak; to exerciſe our induſtry, and prevent our contempt of it for its plainneſs,) and there are *Shallows* for Lambs to *wade* through, that none might be diſcouraged. Chriſt is our Prieſt, and the Prieſts Lips teach knowledge, and he is a merciful Prieſt, *Heb.* 2. 16. Condeſcending in what he teacheth, and in the way of his teaching, to the capacities of his Hearers.

In

In *what he teacheth:* How chary was Christ of charging his Disciples with any thing that they could not brook, *John* 16. 12. *I have many things to say unto unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.* I have some harder Lessons to teach you, but ye are young Schollars, and not able yet to learn them, till ye have been longer in my School, and have attained more ripeness of understanding; therefore I will not trouble you now with them, but leave them to my Spirit, who shall prepare you for them, and enable you to learn them: Your Stomachs are weak, and yet must have that onely which is of light Digestion, Milk, not strong meat, 1 *Cor.* 3. 2. Your Backs are not strong, and therefore I will lay on you none but light burdens, *But ye cannot bear them now*; and therefore ye shall not hear them now, least ye should be offended and discouraged at them. When the Jews enquired of Christ, why his Disciples did not fast often, as well as the Disciples of *John*, and the Pharisees: Observe the reason our tender-hearted Lord gives, *Math.* 9. 15, 16, 17. *No man* (saith he) *puts new Wine into old Bottles, least the*

Wine

Wine burſt the Bottles; or ſoweth an old Garment [illegible] *new Cloth, leaſt the rent be worſe.* Alas, ſaith he, my Diſciples are young Beginners, *Babes* in me, at beſt but *little Children*, not *ſtrong Men*, or *Fathers*, and therefore they muſt not be called preſently to the Auſterities or Severities of Religion; leaſt they, poor Souls, ſhould be diſcouraged in their Work, and faint under it: I muſt proportion their Burden to their Backs, and lead them their own pace, as they are able to go at preſent. Hereafter indeed they ſhall be called to ſuffer great things for my Names ſake; they ſhall be hated and perſecuted of all men, but then they ſhall be fitted for thoſe Severities, and undergoe them with courage; but yet ſuch deep Points, and obſcure Notions, muſt not be offered to Novices.

In the *way of his teaching*, he is very tender and condeſcending; He accommodates his Diſcourſe to their Apprehenſion, Mark 4. 33. *He ſpake as they were able to bear it*; Not as he was able to ſpeak, (he was able to read Lectures above the capacities of Angels) but *as they were able to bear it.* Therefore he

ſpake

ſpake ſo much to them in Parables, becauſe they might the better underſtand him: For though a Parable would make Truth more obſcure, (and ſo Parables and Dark-Sayings are conjoyn'd, *Pſal.* 7. 78. and to ſpeak in Parables, is oppos'd to ſpeaking plainly, *John* 16.26. *John* 16. 29.) yet a Parable reveal'd, unvail'd, (as Chriſt did uſually to his Diſciples, *Matth.* 13. 17, 37.) makes Truth more clear. It gives us the advantage of viewing heavenly Truth in earthly Glaſſes, the Species and Reflections of which we are moſt able to conceive; Therefore our Saviour ſaith, *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not,* (or cannot underſtand) *how ſhall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly*, John 3. 12.

The Inſtructions of Chriſt were like *Water*, Deut. 32. 2. which he powred into thoſe narrow-mouth'd Veſſels by little and little, as they were able to receive it; or as *Rain*, which he diſtil'd on his Hearers (as Rain on the mown Graſs) by drops, and drop after drop, to refreſh them; not by Floods to drown them. *Jacob* conſider'd the Children were young, and the Cattel were with young,

therefore drove gently, least by over-driving he should wrong them, *Gen.* 33. 13. So our Lord Jesus considereth what Men are, how impotent and infirm, and will not over-drive, over-do, least he should undo them, *Isa.* 28. 9, 10. He gives *Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line, Here a little, there a little.*

Will Men or Angels teach with such compassion, with such condescension? It is a Rule of one of the Ancients, That he who will teach Children, must himself be a Child: He must frame and fashion himself to them, and be as one of them, or else he will never teach them. How soon would the dulness and untowardness of Man tire out the patience of Men and Angels, and provoke them to give over teaching them: God's incomparableness herein is fully proved in the incomparableness of God in his Patience, in Chap. 10.

3. He speakes *effectually*: As he hath Power to command us, so he hath Power to enable us to obey his Commands. Men and Angels may *tell* Men their Duty, but they cannot *teach* Men their Duty; they cannot strengthen them, or impower

impower them to obey: He speaketh so as Men hear, and believe and live; *He that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me*, John 6. 45. We have a saying, *Ex quovis ligno non fit Mercurius*, Every man will not make a Mercury: Some so dull and blockish, that none can improve them, or do good upon them, *i. e.* no Creature can; but God can make the dull, the blind, the most ignorant, to conceive and consider, and apprehend and understand the darkest and most difficult Points by speaking to them, *Isa.* 48. 17. *He teacheth to profit*; There is a Power that accompanieth his teaching, that doth the Work. When he saith, Let there be Light in a dark Mind, there is Light; it is so: He is a God *that commandeth Light to shine out of Darkness*, 2 Cor. 4. 6. When he saith, Let there be life in that dead Soul, there is life, it is so, *John* 5. 24. Men and Angels may call long enough to the Blind to see, and the Dead to live, and all in vain. But if a God say to a Sinner that lyeth rotting in the Grave, almost eaten up of the Vermine of Lusts, unsavory, and stinking in the eyes of all men, Isa 32. 4.

Lazarus, Sinner, come forth of thy cursed carnal condition; The man that was bound Hand and Foot, manacled and fetter'd by the Devil, his Jaylor, comes forth, is looſed of his Bonds, and lives for ever.

As the Mariners ſaid of Chriſt, He ſpeaketh with Authority, and commandeth the Winds and Seas, and they obey him; *What manner of Man is this?* Math. 8. 27. So I may ſay, O what manner of God is this, for he ſpeaks with Authority, and the high winds of violent Paſſions, and the fierce Waters of boiſterous Corruptions, and they obey him; they fly, they fall before him? Can Men or Angels ſpeak at this rate? will Sin die at their word? will the Soul live at their command? How long may they call to Sinners to ariſe from the Dead, before they will, before they can anſwer their call?

But if God ſpeaks, the moſt obſtinate, hardened Sinner obeyeth his Voice, ſubmitteth to his Will, and yieldeth himſelf up to his Word; nay, the very Devils are forced to leave their beloved Manſions, the Souls of Men, and to ſeek and ſettle

settle their Habitations elsewhere. He commandeth, and the unclean Spirits come out of Men, *Matth.* 8. 32. If he please but to say, *Get thee behind me Satan*, that Prince of the Powers of the Air, that god of the World, who crows so much on his own Dunghill, the Hearts of the Unregenerate, sneakes away like a Coward, and must in spight of his Teeth obey his Command, *Math.* 4. 10, 11. Yea, God ejecteth him with a word speaking, out of his strongest Holds, the Souls of old, senseless, seared Sinners, and leads Captivity captive, and makes this Jaylor, who laid so many in Irons, his Prisoner and Captive.

CHAP. XV.

God is incomparable in his Word: In its Purity, Mysteries, Prophesies.

2. GOd is incomparable in the *matter* of his speech, as well as in his manner of speaking: If you consider the Purity, Mysteries or Predictions thereof.

1. The *Purity* of its Precepts: His

Word is the most pure, perfect, strict Rule of Righteousness that is imaginable: It commandeth good, nothing but good, and all good, at all times; It forbiddeth evil, all evil, and nothing but evil, and alwayes: *The Commandment is holy, and the Law is holy, just, and good*, Rom. 7. 12. *Holy*, as it is a Copy of the Divine Will; *Just*, as it is correspondent to the highest reason; *Good*, as it is most beneficial to the rational Creature. It is *holy*, as it relates our Duty to God; *Just*, as it respects our Duty to our Neighbours; *Good*, as it concerns our Duty towards our Selves. It is *Holy*, as consecrated to the Service of God; *Just*, as a transcript of the pure Law of Nature; *Good*, as it is the measure and standard of all goodness in the Creatures. It is *Holy*, in what it enjoyns us to do; *Just*, in what it forbids us to do, and *good* in both. What Laws in the World are in any degree comparable to the Laws of God? The *Mahometan* Laws which have gained so much credit in the greatest part almost of the known *World*, are impure Laws, allowing Revenge, Poligamy, and commanding Slaughters, Oppressions,

Oppressions, &c. for the Propagation of their Religion.

The Laws of the severest Heathen *Lycurgus*, *&c.* contained but the Carcass and Body of Purity, had nothing of the Soul and Life thereof. How many Sins against the very Law of Nature did that *Lacedemonian* Law-Giver allow of? and where he or any of the rest did forbid Sin, it was in the outward actions, not in the inward affections: Their Laws did rather Command the covering of Sin, that it might not appear abroad, then the killing of Sin, that it might not be at all: Their Laws were defective as to *persons*, some Men were usually priviledged, and not bound to them; as to the *parts* of men, they gave the inward man liberty, though they restrained the outward, as to *Punishments*; the greatest Penalty they could think of, or impose, was a Temporal Death; They never dreamed of an Hell in another World. But O how pure! how perfect is the Law of God! *Thy Word is very pure*, saith *David*, *Psal.* 119. So pure, that there is not the least mixture, falshood or error in it: It commands all, and nothing but,

conformity to the mind of the great Soveraign, and Lord of all things: *The Law of the Lord is perfect*, Psal. 19. 7. So perfect, that it is not deficient in any thing; It commandeth purity in the whole man, in every faculty of the Soul, in every member of the Body: It commandeth purity in this whole man, at all times, in all companies, in all conditions, in all relations, in all manner of converſation, 1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. *Pſal.* 119. 1, 2.

It's apparent to common ſenſe, that fallen man could never dream of ſuch ſtrict exact Precepts, no, he is ſo far from it, that he is wholly contrary thereunto, *Rom.* 8. 7. And Angels could not imagine them, unleſs God had ſignified his mind to them. For all holineſs being a conformity to the Will of the moſt high God, they could not diſcern what was holy, what was unholy, any farther then they could diſcover the Will of this incomparable God.

2. The *myſtery* of its Doctrines: It containeth ſuch Depths, ſuch bottomleſs Profundities, that could not poſſibly have been imagin'd by Men or Angels, had not God reveal'd them. It acquainteth

eth us with things far above the reach of created Reason, (though not contrary) yet being told us are so correspondent, that there is no ground left for the questioning them. What the great Apostle saith upon occasion of one mystery, we may say upon the whole: *O the Depth! O the Depth of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God!* Rom. 11. 33. O the Depth of the holy Scriptures! There is a Depth in them, that none can fathome, because a Depth in them that hath no bottom; *Great is the mystery of the Bible*: Who could think of a Womans coming into the World without a Woman, as *Eve*; of a mans coming into the World without a man, as the Son of man; nay, without man or woman, as *Adam*? who could think that the same Woman should be a Mother & a Virgin? But these are small mysteries; who could think that many thousands, millions, living many Miles and Ages distant, should be fellow members, and be truly one Body, sympathising with, serviceable to, rejoycing in the welfare of each other; & all be united unto, receive influence from, and live wholly by one Head, as far from them as Heaven is from

the

the Earth? *Eph.* 5. 27, 28, 29, 30. *Coloss.* 2. 19. Who could have thought that three really and personally distinct, should be equal, and one in nature and essence? 1. *John* 5. 7.

Who could have imagin'd, that God should become Man, infinite become finite, the Creator a Creature; the Father of Spirits become Flesh, and the Lord of Life be put to Death? Who could conceive, that he who made all things of nothing, should be made himself of a Woman, made by him: That he whom the Heavens, and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, should be contained in the narrow Womb of a Woman: That the onely Bread of Life should be hungry, the onely Water of Life be thirsty; the onely Rest be weary, the onely Ease be pained, and the onely Joy and Consolation be sorrowful, exceeding sorrowful unto Death?

Who could have imagin'd, that one, yea millions should be rich by anothers poverty, filled by anothers emptiness, be exalted by anothers disgrace, healed by anothers wounds, eased by anothers Pains, be absolved by anothers Condemnation,

nation, and live eternally by another temporal Death? Who could have imagin'd, that infinite Justice and infinite Mercy should be made fast Friends, and fully satisfied by one and the same action; that the greatest fury and the greatest favor, the greatest hatred and the greatest love should concur in, and be manifested by one and the same thing? Could Men or Angels speak such Mysteries? surely No. Several Mysteries in the Scriptures were hid from whole Ages and Generations of Men; *Which in former Ages was not made known to the Children of Men*, Eph. 3. 5. No nor to Angels neither, Verse 10. *To the intent that now unto Principalities and Powers might be made by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God.*

The *Prophesies* and *Predictions* of the Word? Neither Men nor Angels can fore-tell those things which depend not on natural Causes, or which may not be deduced from moral or political Grounds, and even in such things as these are, they may be, and have been deceived. Therefore it was the subtilty of the old Serpent to deliver his Oracles often

ten in ambiguous words, and in deceitful Speeches, that whatsoever happened, his Credit might be salved, as his *Aio te Æacida Romanos vincere posse, & Ibis redibis nunquam per bella peribis, &c.* But God fore-tels what hath no print of any footing in Nature, what neither moral nor political Principles can direct unto, and never fails in his Predictions. He fore-tells the Birth of *Cyrus*, 100 years before he was born, *Isa.* 48. 28. The Birth of *Josiah*, 200 years, 1 *Kings* 13. 2. The Conversion of the *Gentiles* and falling off of the *Jews*, above 2000 years before it came to pass, *Gen.* 9. 27. *Isa.* 49. 6. *Isa.* 54. 9, 10. He fore-tells the Birth of Christ, near 4000 years before he came into the World, *Gen.* 3. 15. And it is very observable, how punctual and particular he is herein, (as knowing how much the well-fare of the World did depend upon the Knowledge of the true *Messiah*,) he tells you long before-hand, of what Tribe he should come, of *Judah*; of what Family, *Davids*; of what Person, a Virgin; where he should be born, in *Bethlehem*; whence he must be called, out of *Egypt*; what his condition should be:

be; in general, full of Sorrows and Griefs; in particular, that he ſhould be diſgraced and reviled, tempted, betrayed, apprehended, deſerted by his Father and Brethren; that he ſhould die, be pierced, not have a Bone broken; be buried, make his Grave with the Rich and the Wicked, and riſe again from the Dead, and reap the fruit of all his Paſſion, to his full ſatisfaction.

He hath fore-told the ſtate of the World, and the Church, in the *Revelations*; from the Primitive times, to the diſſolution of the World, though it's written in ſhort-hand and in dark Characters.

And can any Men or Angels fore-tell ſuch things? God challengeth all the gods to do this; *Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods*; Iſa. 41. 21, 22, 23. The certain Prediction of future Contingents, is ſuch an inſeparable Prerogative of the Deity, and ſuch a ſpecial Priviledge of the Original of all things, that he ingageth to own their Supremacy, and acknowledge their Sovereignty, who can do it. It's ſuch a Jewel in his Crown, that

that none ever ſhared in it: *I have declared the former things from the beginning: I did them ſuddenly, and they came to paſs: I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to paſs, I ſhewed it to thee*, Iſa. 48. 3, & 5. It's peculiar to him, who worketh all in all, to fore-know and fore-tell whatſoever ſhall come to paſs, Acts 15. 18. *Known to God are all his Works, from the beginning of the World*; yea, from all eternity. For he ſtood on the high Mountain of eternity, and thence had a full view of all that his will would produce, and whatſoever ſhould come to paſs.

CHAP. XVI.

God incomparable in his Word, as it is converting, affrighting and comforting.

3. GOD is incomparable in the *effects* of his Word: His Words are Works, they are operative, as well as declarative of his Pleaſure. What he ſpeaketh hath Power and Vertue in it, as well as Weight and Value.

1. It

1. It is efficacious in *converting* the Soul: The word of God can ſtop the tide of nature, when it runneth with the greateſt violence; yea, it can turn it the quite contrary way: Let a man be in the height of his Strength, in the heat of his Youth, ruffling and buſsling among the Sparks of the times, taking a large draught of carnal Pleaſures, and having a full guſt of ſenſual Delights, making his whole life but a diverſion from one Pleaſure to another, (as if he were ſent into the Earth, as *Leviathan* into the waters, only to play and ſport there,) when this man is in his beſt eſtate, in the Zenith of Health and Strength, in the Meridian of his Age, promiſing himſelf a long day of life, and putting the day of death far from him, and thereby giving himſelf the more liberty to the ſervice of his Luſts; yet if the word of God come to this man, who ſucketh in Wind as the wild Aſſes Colt, it makes him pluck in his Plumes, bid adieu to his fooliſh Pleaſures, leave his moſt beloved Luſts, loath himſelf for ever loving them; it alters the man's Palat, that is bitter now which was ſweet before; and he cannot ſavour what

what formerly was his heaven and happineſs; it changeth the bent and frame of his heart, that now he forſaketh with deteſtation what formerly he followed after, as his onely felicity and chiefeſt good; The wild man is tame, the obſtinate man is pliable, and the diſtracted man is recover'd to his wits, *Pſal.* 119. 9. Men and Angels may *perſwade*, but God only can *prevail*. The words of Creatures may work for an outward reformation, but the word of God alone for an inward renovation: He only that made the Heart can mend it. Humane Counſels may do ſomewhat towards the hiding of the corruptions of Nature, but Divine inſtructions are only effectual for the healing of corrupted Nature: *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul*, Pſal. 19. 7. Converting the Soul; The Law of man may bind the Body to its good behaviour, but the Law of God alone can bring the *Soul* to its good behaviour. To turn a Lion into a *Lamb*, Darkneſs into *Light*, a Stone into *Fleſh*, Death into *Life*, (all which is done in converſion) can be effected by the Word of none but a God, *Iſa.* 11. 8, 9, 10. *Eph.* 5. 8. *Ezek.* 26.

Eph.

Eph. 2. 1, & 5. No word but his can take a Cions off from its own natural ſtock, and ingraft it into a new ſtock, *Rom.* 11. 17. *James* 1. 21. 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. *Acts* 2. 41. *Acts* 4. 4.

2. It is efficacious in *affrighting* the Sinner: He ſpeaks (not as Men or Angels, to the Ears only, but) to the hidden-man of the Heart, and ſhatters it in pieces; he plants his Batteries of Threatnings, and Terrors, and Curſes, againſt the inward man of the Conſcience, and puts it into an Ague of trembling and ſhaking Fits, (as we ſee in *Herod*, *Acts* 24. 27.) and levels it to the ground. This word in the mouth of a poor Priſoner at the Bar, frights the proud ſturdy Judge on the Bench. When God ſpeaks, he makes the beſt people afraid, and cry out, *Let not God ſpeak to us, leaſt we die*, and the beſt of that people exceedingly to quake and fear, *Exod.* 19. 19. *Heb.* 12. 21. *The Voice of the Lord is terrible, it ſhaketh the Cedars of* Lebanon, *it ſhattereth the Oakes of* Baſhan, *Pſal.* 29. Thoſe that were Monſters of Mankind for Cruelty and Barbarouſneſs, for Stupidity and Searedneſs, by his Word have been terrified in their Spirits, wounded in their Conſciences, cut to the Heart, and forced

to call out, *Sirs, What shall we do to be saved?* Acts 2. 37.

The most stubborn senseless Sinner, whom neither Mercies nor Miseries could move or melt, who mocked at the Curses of the Law, and the Wrath of the Lord; and as *Leviathan* laughed at the *shaking of those Spears*, whom (as the man possessed with the Devil) no Cords could hold, no Chains could fasten, but he burst all asunder; when the Word of the Lord hath been spoken to him, instead of flying in his face (as formerly when men have spoken to him) he hath fallen down at his feet, been filled with fears and frights, felt the very Fire of Hell flaming in his conscience, and become a very *Magor Missabib*, fear or terror to himself round about: The Word of God hath stuck in his Heart, as the Arrow in the side of the Buck, allowing no ease; whithersoever he hath gone in the night, scaring him with Dreams, and terrifying him with Visions; in the day admitting no rest in his Flesh, nor quietness in his Bones, forcing him in all Places, and in all Companies, still to carry his Jaylour, his Tormentor, his Executioner, along with him; and at last, that he might escape a partial and temporal, to

leap

leap into a total, an eternal Hell: *Ah, who knoweth the Power of his Anger?* of his angry word; or is able to fear him according to his wrath, *Psal.* 90. 11. I may challenge every Man, every Angel, as God himself doth *Job*, *Hast thou an Arm like God? Canst thou thunder with thy Voice like him*, Job 40. 9. If he utter his word of fury, the Rocks are rent in pieces, the most stony hearts are melted; the Mountains are moved, the highest and firmliest seated Sinners are shaken out of their places and senses, the foundations of the World tremble and quake, the strongest Pillars are troubled, the whole frame and body of Nature is affected with a Palsie; Psal. 18. 13. *The Lord thundred in the Heavens, the highest gave forth his Voice*, (what followeth?) *Hail-stones and coals of fire.*

3. It is efficacious in *healing* the wounded Spirit: When God takes the Sword of the Spirit into his own Hand, and wields it with his own Arm, it makes work, it makes wounds to purpose in the consciences of men; the sleepy Soul is now awakened, the secure Soul is now affrighted, the senseless Soul is now affected with his sins and misery, (*Acts* 2. 37.) the man tasteth the bitter-

neſs of his original and actual corruptions, feeleth the weight of Divine fury and indignation, findeth the Poyſon to work in his Bowels, and wracking him with extremity of pain; There *is no reſt in his Fleſh,* Pſal. 38. 4. Job 6. 10 *becauſe of God's anger; nor quiet in his Bones, becauſe of his ſins: The arrows of the Almighty are within him, and his terrors ſet themſelves in array againſt him.* The unquenchable fire flaſheth in his face, and deſtruction (in his thoughts) is ready to lay hold of him; in this Prov. 18. 14. condition he knoweth not what to do, for a *wounded Spirit who can bear?* He tryeth Creatures, but they can afford him no eaſe; *Miſerable Comforters are they all to him, and Phyſicians of no value:* It's the ſame hand that wounded, that alone can cure him; it's the ſame word that bruiſed him, that muſt bind him up; let God but ſpeak to this Soul that is thus ſunk down into Hell, and it will be lifted up to Heaven: *Fools, becauſe of their Iniquities and Tranſgreſſions, are afflicted, their Soul abhoreth all manner of meat* (they are ſo ſick, that they can reliſh, take down nothing,) *and they draw near to the gates of Death,* (they are almoſt in, they are on the brink of Hell;) what courſe muſt be uſed for their cure? truly this, *He ſent his word and*

and healed them, and delivered them from their Destruction, Psal. 107. 17, 18, 19, 20. No Herb in the Garden of the whole World can do these distress'd Creatures the least good. Friends may speak, & Ministers may speak; yea, Angels may speak, and yet all in vain; the wounds are incurable for all their words: But if God please to speak, the dying Soul reviveth. His word is the onely Balm that can cure the wounded conscience; *he sendeth his Word and healeth them.* Conscience is God's Prisoner, he claps it in hold, he layeth it in fetters, that the iron enters the very Soul; this he doth by his word, and truly he onely who shuts up, can let out; all the World cannot open the iron Gate, knock off the shackles, and set the poor Prisoner at liberty, till God speak the word.

David professed, he had quite fainted, had it not been for this *Aqua vitæ*, this Cordial water; *I had perished in my affliction, but thy word comforted me*, Psal. 119. 92. The boistrous Billows went over my Soul, and I had sunk in those deep Waters, had not thy Word bore me up.

CHAP. XVII.

If God be incomparable: 1. *How great is the malignity of Sin, which contemneth, dishonoureth and oppoſeth this God.*

I Come now to make ſome application of this great and weighty Truth: It may be uſeful by way of Information, Counſel and Comfort.

Firſt, By way of *Information:* If God be ſo incomparable, that there is none on Earth, none in Heaven comparable to him; It may inform us,

1. Of the great *venome* and *malignity* of Sin, becauſe it is an injury to ſo great, ſo glorious, ſo incomparable a Being. The *higher* and *better* any Object is, the baſer and the worſe is that action which is injurious to it: To throw dirt on Sack-cloth is not ſo bad as to throw dirt on *Scarlet* or *fine Linnen*. To make a flaw in a pebble or common ſtone, is nothing to the making a flaw in a *Diamond* or *precious ſtone*. Thoſe opprobrious Speeches, or injurious Actions, againſt an ordinary perſon, which are but a breach of the good behaviour, and bear but a common Action at Law; if againſt a

Prince

Prince may be *high Treason*, because of the excellency of his Place, and Majesty of his Person: The worth and dignity of the Object, doth exceedingly heighten and aggravate the Offence. How horrid then is Sin, and of how hainous a nature, when it offendeth and opposeth not Kings, the highest of men; not Angels, the highest of Creatures: But God, the highest of Beings, the incomparable God, to whom Kings and Angels; yea, the whole Creation is less then nothing. We take the size of Sin too low, and short, and wrong, when we measure it by the wrong it doth to our selves, or our Families, or our Neighbours, or the Nation wherein we live; indeed herein somewhat of its evil and mischief doth appear; but to take its full length and proportion, we must consider the wrong it doth to this great, this glorious, this incomparable God: Sin is incomparably malignant, because the God principally injur'd by it, is incomparably excellent. It's one thing to displease and offend man, a poor slimy worm, a mean shallow Creature, of the same make and mold with our selves, and another thing to displease and offend God, that unconceivable immense Being: *If one man sin against*

another, the Judge shall judge him, (an humane Judge may undertake to determine and compriſe Offences between them that ſtand upon the ſame level) *but if a man ſin againſt the Lord, who ſhall intreat for him?* 1 Sam. 2. 25. Here the caſe is alter'd, here is a pitiful finite Creature offending an infinite Creator; what man dares arbitrate this difference, nay who can intercede and interpoſe between theſe too?

Hence, hence it is that there is no leſs then an infinite demerit in ſin, becauſe its an injury to an infinite Majeſty. Nothing diſcovers ſin to be ſo great an evil, as its oppoſition to ſo vaſt, ſo matchleſs, ſo great a good, ſo incomparable a God.

The evil of ſin appeareth ſomewhat in the injury it doth to our Eſtates, (*Prov.* 23. 21. *The Drunkard and Glutton ſhall come to poverty, and idleneſs ſhall cloath a man with rags.*) To our Names (*The name of the Wicked ſhall rot*, Prov. 11. 7.) To our Families (*A wicked man troubleth his own Houſe*, Prov. 15. 27. & Prov. 3. 33.) To our Neighbours (*One ſinner deſtroyeth much good*, Eccl. 3. 18.) To our Nation (*Jer.* 18. 7, 8. *Pſal.* 107. 34. *He turneth a fruitful Land into barrenneſs, for the wickedneſs of them that dwell therein.*)

therein.) To our Bodies (*Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath wound? without cause? They that tarry long at the Wine*, Prov. 23.29,30. Prov.5.11.) To our Souls, He *that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul*, Prov.8.ult. But all this discovers nothing of sins evil, to that which is discover'd by the injury it doth to the incomparable God, because our Estates, our Names, our Families, our Neighbours, our Nations, our Bodies, our Souls, are all nothing, infinitely less then Nothing to the great God, the incomparable. This, this is the only Glass that discovers the horrid ugly features, the monstrous frightful deformities of sins face, that it is a wrong to the blessed God, to him who is the high & lofty one, *Isa.*57.15.

1. In that sin is a *breach* of this incomparable God's *Law*, a violation of his Command, a contradiction of his Will: *Whosoever sinneth, transgresseth the Law, for sin is a transgression of the Law*, 1 John 3.4. Neither the greatness nor smallness of our obedience or disobedience is to be valued, according to the greatness or smallness of the thing commanded or forbidden, nor according to the greatness or smallness of the good or hurt done to man by it, but according

cording to the greatneſs of the Perſon, who commandeth or forbiddeth.

2. In that it is a *contempt* of this incomparable God's *Authority*, a ſlighting his Dominion, a denying his Sovereignty; *Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey his Voice?* (Exod. 5.2.) is the Voice of every Sinner: We are our own (ſay they) *Who is Lord over us*, *Pſal.* 12.4. They know no Maker, and therefore own no Maſter: For this cauſe the Sinner is ſaid to *caſt* the incomparable God *behind his back*, as not worth minding or regarding, 1 *Kings* 14. 9. And *to deſpiſe him* as ſome mean inconſiderable Being, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. 2 *Sam.* 12. 9. & 10.

3. In that it is a *diſhonouring* this incomparable God, whoſe *name alone is excellent*; It layeth him low, who is the *moſt high*, *Pſal.* 92.1. *Through breaking the Law, diſhonoureſt thou God*, Rom. 2.23, 24. It is ill to reproach a common man, worſe to reproach a Noble man, or a Prince; but O how bad is it to reproach the great God! to blaſpheme that worthy Name: Sin layeth the honour of this incomparable God (which is more worth then millions of Worlds) in the duſt, and trampleth on it. The *Romans* when they would mark one with ignominy, and brand

brand him with reproach, would put him out of their Senate, or any place of Credit in which he was, and pull down his Statue or Monument, if any were erected to his Honour. Sin degrades and dethrones God, it will not allow him to be the Lord and Supreme of the World, and it defaceth his Image where-ever it finds it, as one contrary expels another: It disgraceth his Justice, thence is called *Unrighteousness*, 1 *John* 1.6. His Wisdom, thence is called *Folly*, *Prov.* 5. 23. His Patience, thence is called *Murmuring*, *Jude* 16. His Power, thence is called *Weakness*, *Rom.* 5, 8. His Mercy, thence is called *Unthankfulness*, *Luke* 6.35. His Knowledge, thence is called *Ignorance*, and a *work of Darkness*, 1 Pet. 1.14. *Eph.* 5.8. His Truth, thence is called *a Lye*, and *lying Vanity*, *Psal.* 58. 2. *Jonah* 2, 8. In all these, and every way, it disgraceth his Holiness, which is his Glory, and the glory of all his Attributes, *Exod.* 15. 11. thence is called *Filthiness*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Uncleanness*, *Rom.* 1. 24.

4. In that it is a *fighting* with, and (to its power) a destroying this incomparable God: The murther of any man is hainous, it is horrid, 'tis against nature, and 'tis the extremest mischief that one Creature can do

do to another, *Gen.*4.10. *Matth.*10.28. The murther of a Father or a Sovereign is far more hainous, as being more against Nature, and against more ingagements to the contrary. He is curſed that mocketh his Father; and his Heart ſmote him who did but cut off the ſkirt of his Kings Garment, thought his Enemy; what a Monſter then is he that kills either? but O what a Monſter! what a Devil is that which deſtroyeth (as far as it is able) the good, the gracious, the great, the glorious, the incomparable God? Truly, ſin is ſuch a Monſter, ſuch a Devil, that were its power equal to its ſpite, and its ſtrength anſwerable to its malice, the living God ſhould not live a moment.

Omne peccatum eſt Dei-cidium, All ſin is God-murder: The Sinner *hates* God, *Rom.*1. 30. and hatred ever wiſheth, and, as 'tis able, worketh the deſtruction of its object: *The Fool hath ſaid in his heart, There is no God*, Pſal.14.1. *i.e.* It is a pleaſing thought to him, to ſuppoſe there were no God; as to guilty Priſoners, to imagine there were no Judge to arraign and condemn them; whom we fear as hurtful to us, we hate, and wiſh he were taken out of the way: In order hereunto the Sinner ſtrives with God, and

and contendeth with him, *Job* 34.7. fighteth against him, *Acts* 5.39. *He ſtretcheth out his hand againſt God, and ſtrengtheneth himſelf againſt the Almighty:* (He puts forth all his force, and venteth all his ſtrength,) *He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick boſſes of his Bucklers*; Runs upon him as one Enemy upon another, furiouſly, without fear, and, as he is able, gets him down, ſets his Feet on his Neck, trampleth on him, and cruſheth him, *Job.* 15.25,26.

O how odious! how loathſome, how abominable is ſin, that breaks the Law, ſlights the Authority, diſhonors the Name, and to its utmoſt dethrones and deſtroys the Being of this incomparable God, this ſelf-ſufficient, independent, abſolutely perfect, eternal, incomprehenſible, infinite Being, which alone deſerves the name of Being, and to which all other Beings are no Beings. *Reader*, ſhould this God of Glory appear to thee, as once to *Abraham*, and ſhew thee a glimpſe of his excellent glory, that is above the Heavens; ſhould he diſcover to thee but a little of that greatneſs which the Heavens, and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, of that duration which had no beginning, hath no ſucceſſi-

on,

on, knoweth no ending; of those perfections that admit of no bounds, no limits, that are uncapable of the least addition or accession to them, and then should say unto thee (as when he appeared to *Saul*) *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Man, man, why despisest thou my Commands? why despisest thou my Authority? Sinner, how darest thou dishonour my Name, and seek my destruction?* What wouldst thou then think of Sin? O what wouldst thou then think of thy self for thy sins! Shouldst thou not have other thoughts of sin, and of thy self for sin, then ever yet thou hast had? Wouldst thou not even loath thy self, for being so base, so vile, so unworthy; yea, so mad, as to offend & affront, and fight against such a God? wouldst thou not cry out as *Job, I have sinned against thee, and what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of men*, Job 7.20. *I have sinned against thee, an incomparable, infinite, unconceivable Being: I have wronged thee, the most high, most holy, most blessed God, and what shall I do unto thee? what amends shall I make thee? what reparation shall I give thee? It is impossible for me, should I weep & wail, and lament and grieve millions of Ages, to make the least satisfaction for the injury I have done to such a Majesty.*

a Majesty. Or wouldst thou not say as he in another place, *Lord, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eyes see thee; wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes,* Job 42.5,6. *Lord, I have heard of thee somewhat by thy word, and by thy works, they have told me somewhat of thy beauty and glory, and excellency; howbeit I believed them not, but now mine Eyes have seen thy Majesty and Royalty, and Sovereignty, wherefore I abhor my self, that ever I should transgress thy godly Will, that ever I should blaspheme thy great Name, that ever I should despise thy Supremacy, and fight against thy Majesty. Ah I Reprobate, turn away mine eyes from my self, cannot endure to behold my self; my stomach is turn'd against my self, I loath my self, that ever I should presume, and dare to contest and contend with, to wrong and injure thine Excellency; I recant all that I have been, all that I have done against thee, and repent, am unfeignedly grieved for it, heartily wish I had never been so, never done so, but since what is past cannot be recalled, I will as far as I can be revenged on my self, for my impudency and distraction, I will lie in the dust, lick the dust, own my self to be much baser and viler then the dust, I will abhor my self in dust and ashes.*

This

This, this is the venome, the malignity of sin, that it is oppoſite and contrary, offenſive and injurious to the incomparable God. This is the conſideration which ſhould humble us moſt for our ſins: This was the weight that preſſed *David* down moſt, and laid him ſo low in the day of his Repentance; *Againſt*
Pſal. 51. 4. *thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done evil in thy ſight*: Though he had ſinned againſt the Enemies of God, in occaſioning their blaſphemies; againſt the friends of God, in grieving their Spirits; againſt his whole Kingdom, in provoking God to plague them; though he had ſinned againſt *Bathſheba*, in defiling her Body and Soul; againſt *Uriah*, both in the matter of his Wife and Life, and againſt his own Body and Soul; yet he looks upon theſe, though great in themſelves, yet little, nothing comparatively; the Head of the Arrow that pierced his heart, was this, *I have ſinned againſt the Lord*, 2 Sam. 12. 13. *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned.* The injury which he did to himſelf and others, was ſo inconſiderable, in compariſon of the injury he did to God, that he paſſeth it quite by, in his penitential *Pſalm*, & ſticks wholly upon this, *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned.* This is the ſtrongeſt the weightieſt Argument to drive and diſſwade from ſin; none is like it. When *Moſes* would couch all Arguments in one, he uſeth this inſtead of all, *Num.* 32. 23. *But if ye will not do ſo*, (*i.e.* perform your promiſe to aſſiſt your Brethren, till they have conquer'd their Enemies, and are ſetled in their Poſſeſſions; what then? what great harm if they do not? Is it not that they ſin againſt their Brethren, & wrong their own Souls? No, but) *Behold* (mark it, it is worthy your attention, and moſt ſerious conſideration,) *ye have ſinned againſt the Lord*, the great, the mighty, the almighty, the incomparable God. CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

If God be incomparable, how great is the madneſs and miſery of impenitent Sinners?

SEcondly, if God be ſuch an incomparable God, it informeth us of the madneſs and miſery of Sinners. *Uſe 2.*

1. Of their *madneſs in daring to offend* him, and to contend with him. 2. In *wilfully loſing* this incomparable God.

1. How great is their *madneſs in daring to offend* him? yea, in daring him to his face? Reader, if thou ſhouldſt ſee a man without any cauſe ſtriving with an whole Army, hacking and hewing, and provoking them to kill him, you would think ſurely the man is mad, otherwiſe he would never thus wilfully run himſelf into a certain ruine. I tell thee every time thou wilfully breakeſt his Laws, thou acteſt more like a diſtracted man; for thou fighteſt againſt that God who is ſtronger than millions of Armies, who is Almighty; and thou provokeſt him to deſtroy thee who can wink thee into the other world, and look thee into the eternal

nal Lake, and hiſs thee into Hell flames. Man, art thou Gods match, that thou offereſt to enter the Liſt with him? *Do ye* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *provoke the Lord to anger? Are ye ſtronger than he?* 1 Cor. 10.22. It's one thing to provoke men to anger, and another thing to provoke the Lord to anger. Man hath but a little heart, and a ſmall hand; his anger and power cannot at utmoſt exceed finite; but Gods heart and hand, his anger and power are both infinite. If the wrath of a King *be a Meſſenger of Death*, what thinkeſt thou is the wrath of immenſity, and the ſtroak of Omnipotency? What then is the wrath of a God? Sinner doſt thou know what thou doſt when thou breakeſt his Laws, ſlighteſt his Love, diſhonoureſt his Name, grieveſt his Spirit? I tell thee thou provokeſt a God who is incomparable in holineſs, and hath threatned thy deſtruction; who is incomparable in power, and can accompliſh what he hath threatned; and who is incomparable in truth, and cannot but make good with his arm, what he hath ſpoken with his mouth: *Wo be to him that ſtriveth with his Maker: let the Potſherds ſtrive with the Potſherds of the earth*, Iſa. 45. 1. God is

a

a *God of Peace*, he hates ſtrife; but if men will be ſtriving, he wiſheth them rather to meddle with thoſe that are their matches, poor ſilly worms like themſelves, and not to ſtrive with their Maker, who is infinitely their Superiour in authority and power, and every perfection. Here is ſawcineſs indeed, for a pitiful nothing to challenge Almightineſs to Battel. *Who* (in his wits, in his ſenſes, that were not quite diſtracted) *would ſet Briars and Thorns againſt me in Battel? I would go through them, I would burn them up all together*, Iſa.27. 4. *Briars and Thorns* are not match to a fire; how eaſily, how ſpeedily, how certainly doth the fire conſume them as ſoon as it layeth hold of them? how much leſs is weak man a match for God, who is a *conſuming fire*? When the *Roman* Poet was deſired to make Verſes againſt his Emperour, he anſwered, *Nolo in eum ſcribere qui poteſt proſcribere, I'le not jeer and jeſt with him that can kill me in earneſt.* Our Saviour tells us, *What King going to war againſt another, ſitteth not down firſt, and conſulteth, whether he be able with* 10000 *to meet him that cometh againſt him with* 20000? *or elſe while the other is a great way off ſendeth to his Ambaſ-*

ſadours, and deſireth conditions of Peace, Luk. 14. 31, 32. O that when the Devil and fleſh entice the Sinner to ſport with and make a mock of Sin, *Prov.* 10. 23. he would but conſider, *it's ill jeſting with edged tools*, it's ill jeſting with unquenchable Burnings; for how *can his heart endure, or his hands be ſtrong in the day that the great God ſhall deal with him?* Ezek. 22. 14.

2. Again, How great is their *madneſs*, who will *venture the eternal loſs of this God*, this incomparable God, for every baſe luſt? what a mad man is he, who will ſtake a Million againſt a Mite, a Crown againſt a Crum, Subſtance againſt Shadows, all things againſt nothing, the bleſſed boundleſs God againſt a moments ſenſual delight. Was not *Shimei* bereft of his wits, to hazard his life for a little uncertain worldly profit by his Servant? The Lord Jeſus doth moſt fitly call him a fool, who would hazard and loſe the incomparable God for a little corruptible Gold, *Luke* 12. 20. The Spirit of God ſpeaks the Prodigal to be *beſide himſelf*, when he left bread, bread enough, bread enough in his Fathers houſe, for huſks, and not a Belly full neither, and among Swine, *Luke* 15. 18, 19, 20.

and

and when *he came to himself*, he considered what a mad man he was, to wallow among Swine, and feed on such bruitish fare, which could never fill his belly, when he might have been feasting among the Children of God in his Fathers house, with plenty of what is bread indeed, able to satisfie a capacious Heaven-born Soul. Friend, think of it seriously, the next time thou art tempted to Sin, will this Oath, or this Cup, or this Theft, or this Wantonness, or this neglect of Duty ballance the everlasting loss of the incomparable God? will this lust, this moments pleasure make amends for the loss of him who is eternal life, and a River of unconceivable and unchangeable pleasures? shall I be so besotted, bewitched, distracted, as to loose real mercies for *lying vanities*, the fountain of living waters for *Broken Cisterns*, the food of Angels for the worlds scraps; a precious Soul, an inestimable Saviour, an incomparable God, for a toy, a trifle, a poor empty guilded nothing? Did ever any in *Bedlam* buy so dear, or sell so cheap, or manifest the like madness?

2. Of the *misery* of Sinners. They shall loose this incomparable God for ever; nay,

they muſt have him for their everlaſting enemy.

1. Their *miſery* conſiſteth partly in this, that they muſt *depart for ever* from this incomparable God, *Math.*7.23. *Depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* Math.25.41. *Depart from me ye curſed.* O how dreadful a ſound will the word *Depart* make in the Sinners ears? yea, what a deep wound will it make in his heart? *Depart from me*; Ah! whether do they go, that go from God? To depart from riches and honours, and carnal comforts for ever, will affect and afflict him to purpoſe who placeth his happineſs in them; to loſe health, and liberty, and friends, and relations for ever, is no inconſiderable loſs to him that knoweth not where to have them made up. To loſe the Ordinances of God, ſeaſons of Grace, the tenders, intreaties, invitations of the Goſpel for ever, is ſuch a loſs that a ſenſualliſt is uncapable of conceiving the greatneſs of. To loſe the Communion of perfect Spirits, the company of glorious Angels, the bleſſed exerciſes of the Heavenly Hoſt for ever, will not a little affright and amaze, and vex and terrifie the wicked, when they once come to have their eyes opened, and their Con-

Conſciences awakened in the other world: But to depart from the *incomparable God* for ever, to loſe the only Paradice of pleaſures, the only fountain of living Waters, the only author of true felicity; to loſe the unſearchable Mine of Riches, the inexhauſtable well of Salvation, the ineſtimable Sun of Righteouſneſs; to loſe the deareſt Father, the wiſeſt Guide, the ſtrongeſt Shield, the ſweeteſt Love, the cloſeſt Friend, the tendereſt Mercy, the richeſt Grace, the higheſt Honour, the only happineſs; to loſe the Lord of Life, the Lord of Glory, the Lord of Lords; to loſe the God of Hope, the God of all Grace, the God of all Conſolation, the God of Peace, the God of Gods, the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the incomparable God; and to loſe him totally and for ever, is the loſs of all loſſes, is ſuch a loſs as no tongue can declare, no mind can conceive, is ſuch a loſs as never was the like before it, nor ſhall, nor can be the like after it. He that hath loſt God, hath nothing left that is good, he hath loſt all that was worth having or ſaving. *Lord whether ſhall we go, if we go from thee? thou haſt the words of eternal life*, Joh. 6. 68.

Reader, how great is the Sinners loſs in the other world, how great ſoever his gain is in this? Ah where *is his hope though he hath gained, when God ſhall take away his Soul?* Job 27.8. Can the greateſt gain Counter-ballance the loſs of him to whom the whole world, yea, millions of worlds are traſh and trifles?

The greatneſs of any loſs is to be meaſured by the excellency and value of that which we loſe; therefore if God be ſo incomparable in all perfections, the loſs of Sinners, who loſe this God totally and eternally, muſt be an incomparable loſs. As there is no gain equal to the gain of a God, all other gains are but painted Babies or Butterflies to this; ſo there is no loſs equal to the loſs of a God, all other loſſes are but Bug-bears to fright Children with to this; this is a loſs with a witneſs, a loſs which nothing can countervail, ſupply, or make up, in which all that is good is gone for ever. As *Micah* ſaid to the *Iſraelites*, when they asked him what he ayled to cry out ſo, *Ye have taken away my God, and what have I more?* Judg. 18.22. So will the Sinner in the other world, ſcreech horribly, and complain heavily of his

his deceitful Flesh (which now he makes such provision for) *Thou hast taken away my God, and what have I more? I am poor, a beggar, nothing worth, worse than naught, wholly ruined, utterly undone by thee, I have lost my God, and with him all that is good.*

Reader, if thou livest without God, ponder, O ponder in the midst of all thy gettings what thou art loosing; yea, what thou shalt loose (if thou dost not return) for ever and ever. Did the Disciples weep and wail, that they should see the face of a good man no more on earth, *Sorrowing most of all, for the words that he spake unto them, that they should see his face no more*, Acts 20. 38. And dost thou think it will not fill thy heart with sorrow, and cut it with anguish, to hear the blessed God, the incomparable God say to thee, *Sinner, farewel, farewel for ever, thou shalt see my face no more for ever?* Believe it, those words will sound more dolefully in thine ears, than thou art now aware of; they will be a Passing Bell to all thy hopes, and joyes, and comforts, and delights; they will be a knell to Toll the Death and Burial of whatsoever may be refreshing and reviving to thee, of all thine ease, and rest, and liberty,

and

and peace, and health, and ſtrength, and friends, and relations, and all that may in the leaſt conduce to thy comfort or happineſs. Now poſſibly thou canſt be merry enough without God, thou hadſt rather have his room than his company, preferreſt a life without him, before a life with him; and ſayeſt unto him, *Depart from me, I deſire not the knowledge of thy wayes*, Job 21. 14. And the reaſon of this Atheiſm and Prophaneneſs, is thine ignorance; thou knoweſt not what a fountain of life, what bowels of love, what an hive of ſweetneſs, what an ocean of happineſs the bleſſed incomparable God is, neither believeſt what Scripture ſpeaks hereof: but when once thou entereſt into the other world, and haſt loſt this God irrecoverably, thou ſhalt know what thou haſt loſt; but then, if ever, that ſaying of the wiſe man will be verified, *He that encreaſeth knowledge, encreaſeth ſorrow*, Eccleſ. 1.18. And then thou ſhalt believe the truth of the glaſs of Scripture in its repreſentations of the beautiful face of God, though thy faith will be the faith of a Devil, to thy terror, and torment. Ah Sinner, when thou ſhalt know and believe what a vaſt treaſure, what a River of pleaſure,

ſure, what a perfect good, what fulneſs of joy, what ſolid comfort, what real ſatisfaction, what a weight of glory thou haſt loſt for ever, without the leaſt hopes and poſſibility of regaining, and loſt for baſe, vile, ſordid luſts, for a little fooliſh brutiſh momentany pleaſure; what thoughts (thinkeſt thou) will then ſeize thee? what anguiſh and remorſe ſurprize thee? Ah how wilt thou loath, and hate, and curſe thy ſelf for thy folly and madneſs? thou wilt gnaſh thy teeth for envy at them that ſit at Heavens Table, feaſting with the fruit of the *tree of life*, and drinking of the *pure Rivers of water which flow from the throne of God, and the Lamb*; and thou wilt weep and wail for thy own diſtraction, that thou ſhouldſt refuſe the offers of all thoſe dainties, and delicates, and delights, when they were made to thee in the day of thy life; that thou ſhouldſt ſhut thy own mouth, and wilfully refuſe all thoſe rich and coſtly Cordials, and ſhut the door of heaven and happineſs againſt thee with thine own hands. Ah Sinner, little, little doſt thou know at the preſent what it is to loſe this God. Other loſſes may be corrective, but this is *deſtructive*; God whips in others, but he *Executes*

cutes in this; Other loſſes may be the part of his Children, but this is the *Portion of Devils.* All joy, all comfort is ſtab'd to the heart, pierced through, the heart blood of it is let out with this one word (ſharper than any two-edged Sword) *Depart. Write this man comfortleſs* (as it was ſaid of one *Jer.22.ult.*) *a man that ſhall not proſper all his dayes.* Write this poor Soul comfortleſs, a Soul that ſhall not have a bit of bread, a drop of water, a glimpſe of light, a moments eaſe, or crum of comfort, all the long day of eternity. Ah Friend, think of it betimes, *Woe be to thee if God depart from thee,* Hoſ. 9. 12.

2. Their miſery conſiſteth in this alſo, that they ſhall have this *incomparable God for their enemy.* As there is no friend like God, and therefore their privative miſery muſt be great, exceeding great, unconceivably great; ſo there is no enemy like God, and therefore the poſitive miſery of Sinners muſt be matchleſs and beyond all compariſons. The greater any ones power and anger are, the greater their miſery is who fall under the ſtroak of that power, and the force of that anger. God is incomparable in power, he worketh arbitrarily, irre-

irreſiſtably, omnipotently; he hath a mighty and an almighty arm: God is incomparable in anger, his anger roots up, pulls down, kills, makes horrid ſlaughters, removeth the mountains, ſhaketh the foundations of the earth, is a conſuming fire, burning and waſting all that comes near it. *Thou, even thou art to be feared, for none may ſtand when thou art angry.* Woe therefore to them that have this God for their Enemy; it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, *Heb.* 12. 23. *David* choſe rather to fall into the hands of God than men, 2 *Sam.* 24. 14. becauſe he was a child of God (though afflicted ſharply by him; for love can conſiſt with anger, though not with hatred) and therefore deſired, ſince he muſt be ſcourged, to be whipt by a loving Father (who would conſider his ſtrength (what he could bear) as well as his fault and offence, and accordingly uſe his rod) rather than by a cruel enemy, who hated him, and had not the leaſt mercy or pity for him. Beſide, this world is the Stage whereon the mercy of God acteth its part (Juſtice muſt have its courſe and ſolemn triumph in the other world.) He is here *good to all*, his Sun ſhineth, Pſal. 90.

ſhineth, and Rain falleth upon the juſt and unjuſt, *Pſ.* 145.9. *Math.* 5.45. Therefore it's better for any man upon earth to fall into the hands of God, than the beſt Friend or neareſt Relation in the world. But the Sinner is the object only of Gods wrath, of his hatred, of his abhorrency, after death; God then puts off all pity, all tenderneſs, all bowels towards him; and the other world is the place wherein his Juſtice (that is now clouded and eclipſed) ſhall ſhine forth in its full force and ſtrength, and appear in all its beauty and brightneſs. And therefore it muſt of neceſſity be a fearful thing for a poor creature to fall into the hands of the living God; to have nothing but his naked fleſh, his own weak Soul, to bear the ſtroak of infinite power, ſet on and urged to ſtrike home, by infinite anger, and that for ever.

All the wrackings and torturings, the extream pains and aches, the violent Convulſions and conſternations, the dreadful horror and anguiſh, the everlaſting chains of darkneſs, the never dying worm, and the fire that never goeth out of the Devils and damned, are but the expreſſions and fruits

fruits of the matchleſs power and anger of this incomparable God. Therefore they are called *Wrath*, *Rom.*2. 4. the *wrath of God*, John 3. *ult.* and *wrath to come*, 1 Theſſ. 1. *ult.* Reader, think of it; if the *wrath of a King*, (a man like thy ſelf, though cloathed with more civil power and ſtrength) be as *the roaring of a Lyon* (which makes all the Beaſts of the Forreſt to quake and tremble, *Amos* 3. 6.) what then is the wrath of an *Almighty infinite God?* If he wound his friends, the objects of his eternal choice, the travail of his Beloved Sons Soul, thoſe on whom he intendeth to glorifie the riches of his love and grace for ever (in the day of his anger, for their diſobedience) with the wound of *an enemy*, yea, with *the wounds of a cruel one*, Jer. 30. 14. if he break their bones, and cauſe the Arrow of his Quiver to enter into their Reins; if he fill their Souls with bitterneſs, and make them drunk with wormwood; if he makes them water their Couches with Tears, and go mourning all the day long; if his anger cauſeth them to roar unceſſantly, and his terrors make them diſtracted; if he be to them as a Bear lying in wait, and as a Lyon Prov. 10. 12.

in

in secret places; How will he wound thee his enemy? how will he deal with thee whom he infinitely hateth? what a Bear, what a Lyon, what a Fire will he be to thee? how unable wilt thou be to stand under, and yet how impossible to avoid the weight of his Omnipotent arm and infinite anger? Lay it to heart timely, and make thy peace with him through his Son, that thou mayest prevent it. Sure I am thou wouldst not fry in flames, or boyl alive in a Furnace of scalding Lead a thousand years, for this whole worlds command 10000 years: Ah why then shouldst thou for a little profit, a little pleasure, a little honour for a few dayes, (for thy life is but a vapour) bring thy self under a necessity of frying in the flames, and boyling in the Furnace of the Almighty Gods anger for ever and ever? O friend be wise on this side the other world.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

If God be incomparable, how monstrous is their Pride who compare themselves to the incomparable God.

THirdly, If God be such an incomparable God, it informeth us, what *abominable Pride and desperate presumption* they are guilty *of*, *who compare with, and prefer themselves before* this God. If he be so transcendently excellent in his Being, Attributes, Word, and Works; how desperately saucy and impudent are they who put themselves in the ballance with God? *Behold all Nations to me are as nothing, yea, less than nothing, and vanity: To whom then will ye liken me? or to what will ye compare me?* Isa. 40. 17, 18. To liken God to any is the grossest Idolatry, and to liken any to God is the highest arrogancy. *Babylon* that sets her self *in the Throne of God, and exalteth her self above all that is called God*, is the *mysterie of iniquity*, the man of Sin, in truth the dregs of the very Devil, 2 *Thess.* 2. 9. It's a debasing God, not to adore him, and admire him according to

his excellent Majesty, and vast immensity; what a debasing then is it of God to compare him to poor pitiful nothings, as all Men and Angels are to him? He debaseth himself to open his eyes upon men, upon Angels, to behold things that are done in *Heaven and Earth*, *Ps.* 113. 5. But he will not debase himself to compare with Men and Angels, he scorneth to put himself into the Scales with them, he is infinitely above and beyond all Comparatives, all Superlatives. *Comparisons* (we say) *are odious*; but no comparison that ever was, hath in the least degree that odiousness which this hath, for a Man or an Angel to compare with their *Maker*. The slime, and clay, and earth, may very much better compare with the Potter; both are narrow limited beings, both are earth and clay; yet the Potter would think it a great dishonour to him, (who hath a body curiously wrought, and an Heaven-born spiritual immortal soul) and desperate arrogancy in the clay and dirt which he trampleth on, to compare with him. And is it not greater pride in man to compare with God, when there is an infinite distance between them in all things? yet so ambitious and arrogant

gant is man, that he dares to do this. Angels and *Adam* both aspired to equal their Maker, they would needs be independent and self-sufficient, they endeavoured to cut off the entail, and to hold wholly and only of themselves; but they ruin'd themselves, and made themselves baser than beasts, by aspiring thus to raise themselves to that impossible pitch of a Partnership with God.

It's a favour, that Men and Angels may be like God in some rayes and beams of his holiness and purity; but it's impossible for Men or Angels to be like God in the rich Jewels of his Crown, his independency, absolute perfection, self-sufficiency, infiniteness and supremacy. He stampt some impressions of himself upon his creatures, but he took no impressions of his creatures upon himself; if they were made in his likeness, he was not made in their likeness; it is deviliſh impudency and blasphemy, for the higheſt Creature to weigh with the Creator. This was *Lucifer*'s pride, *I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my Throne above the Stars, I will be like the most High*, Isa. 14. 13, 14. But his pride got a fall, and a shrewd one too. God cannot brook a Rival, he cannot bear an equal, there must

be but *one Sun in the Heavens.* A Prince may take it kindly from his Subjects, if they endeavour to imitate him, in his mercy, justice, temperance, chastity, and in those things that are general and common to him and them; because hereby his Subjects honour him, (for by their imitation of him, they acknowledge excellency in him) but if his Subjects shall undertake to imitate him in his *regalia*, those things that are proper to him as a King, should they aspire to make Laws, to make Peace and War, to wear the Crown, sway the Scepter, and ascend the Throne, he could not bear it, but would judge them Rebels guilty of High Treason, and worthy of death; because hereby they extreamly dishonour him, *viz.* in making themselves equal to him, and robbing him of that Superiority which God hath given him: So God is pleased and delighted that Men and Angels should resemble him in those perfections of his, that are common and communicable; as to be patient, and meek, and loving, and righteous, and heavenly, and holy; because hereby they glorifie him, *Math.* 5. 16. But if the creatures should go about to be like him in the *peculiar Cognisances*

nisances of the Deity, his Self-sufficiency, Independency, Governing others at their will, Enacting Laws to oblige the Consciences of others, exacting Worship from their fellow Creatures; so God cannot, God will not suffer it, for hereby they go about to rob him of his Supremacy, to dethrone and ungod him. How often doth God tell us in Scripture, to quel such presumptuous thoughts, that he is not mans fellow, mans familiar? *God is not a man*, Numb. 23. 29. *I am God, and not man*, Hos. 11. 9. *He is not a man as I am*, saith *Job* 9. 32 v. Though God was pleased out of his infinite grace to become man, that man might once more be like God in those communicable properties forementioned; yet he will not permit it, nay, it is altogether impossible, for man to become God, and be like him in the special prerogatives of the Deity: There is still an infinite distance between the divine and the humane nature. They who prate of being Godded, and turned into the essence of the Deity (as some have impudently and blasphemously written) are either intollerably weak, or devilishly wicked, or both. Now because many are guilty of the strange pre-

ſumption to compare with God, who little think it, I ſhall very briefly name two or three ſorts of men.

1. Such as quarrel with the *Precepts* of God, as if they were too ſtrict, too preciſe, too pure, and that God commanded more than was needful, *Pſal.* 2. 2. *Rom.* 8. 7. This is a comparing with God, yea, a preferring our ſelves before God; and ſuch ſpeak as if they would be in Gods Throne to make Laws, and as if they would enact better Laws, more conducing to, and convenient for the welfare of mankind. Becauſe man hath vitiated his nature, and diſtempered all his faculties, he is angry at God for enjoyning him a ſtrict diet, and forbidding him what would feed his Diſeaſe. *A ſoul Stomach loatheth the wholſomeſt food.*

2. When men queſtion the *Providences* of God, as if they were not good, and wiſe, and righteous, theſe compare, yea, prefer themſelves before God; their voice is like *Abſolom's*, *O that I were Judge, things ſhould not go thus at ſix and ſevens; See here is none to do juſtice to you; O that I governed the world, there ſhould be no ſuch diſorders as are now, no ſuch inequality amongſt men, The righteous ſhould not periſh, nor the wicked*

flouriſh

flouriſh as they do: Theſe wayes are not equal, *Ezek.* 33. 13, 17. Theſe men contend with God for Soveraignty: *Why ſtrivеſt thou with him?* Job 3. 13. Theſe men accuſe God of folly, and think themſelves wiſer; *but ſhall he that contendeth with God inſtruct him?* Job 40. 2. He that complains of Gods dealings, undertakes to teach God in what manner and by what means the world ſhould be better governed: Theſe men compare with God for juſtice; nay, condemn him of injuſtice, *Job* 40. 8. *Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayeſt be Righteous?*

Gods wayes are often ſecret, his pathes *are in the Seas*, and his goings *in deep waters*, *Pſal.* 73. 19. and becauſe men cannot *fathom* them, therefore they find fault with them. He writes his mind often in ſhort-hand, in dark Characters; and becauſe poor blind man cannot read them, therefore he wrangleth with them, *Thy Judgments are a great deep*, Pſa. 36. 9.

3. When men tax the *Decrees* of God, as if they were unrighteous, partial, and ordered with reſpect of perſons, they then compare with God, as if, in caſe they had been at Heavens Council-Table when all

things were debated and concluded, there should have been more mild and moderate, more just and righteous resolves and conclusions. These men think and speak evil of the things they understand not; and it would become them better to mind Faith and Repentance, and ensure their effectual Calling, than pry into or meddle with those secrets of Heaven. No man hath a line long enough to measure God by; his eternal works and wayes are beyond all our understandings and apprehensions, and so much fitter for our admiration than curious disquisition, *Rom.* 9. 17, *to* 24.

4. Once more, Those Princes, or Masters, or Parents, which command what God forbids, or forbid what God commands, compare with God, and usurp his authority; for their power to command, & right to be obey'd, must (in their conceits) be equal to Gods, or else why do they give Laws in opposition to his? or how can they expect to be obey'd? They who command divine worship to Bread and Wine, and places, or any creature, compare with and prefer themselves before God: which is desperate pride and presumption, 1 *Kings* 21.9,10,11. 2 *Sam.* 13. 28.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

If God be incomparable, then incomparable Service and Worship is due to him.

FOurthly, If God be an incomparable God, then *incomparable Service and Worship is due to him.* All service must be suitable to its object. The higher the Prince, the higher honour he doth and may expect. The Heathen were sensible of this, that such worship must be given to their Deities as was suitable to them; therefore the *Persians* who worshipped the Sun, offered to him a *flying horse*, noting strength and swiftness; because the Sun was strong to run his race. God is a great God, and therefore must have great worship. *Solomon* gives this reason why the Temple, the place of Gods worship, must be great, 2 *Chron.* 2. 3. *The House which I build is great* (why?) *for great is our God above all Gods.* A great Palace is most suitable and becoming a great Prince. It reflects upon God, it's a slighting him, to give him any thing that is ordinary; as it is to a King to be put off with common entertainment at the houses of his Subjects. As he is the best, so he

he will be ſerved with the beſt. *Curſed be the deceiver; who hath in his flock a Male, and offereth to the Lord a corrupt thing.* Why, what is the matter, that there muſt be ſuch care about, and choice of his Sacrifices? God himſelf gives you the reaſon, and a good reaſon for it, *For I am a great King, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, and my name is dreadful among the Heathen,* Mal. 1. 10. Petty Princes may be owned and ſerved with petty Preſents; but a great King, a great Soveraign, muſt have great Sacrifices.

When the Prophet had deſcribed the incomparable excellency of God, how all Nations were to him as the leaſt *drop in a Bucket* to the Ocean, and the *ſmall duſt* in the ballance to the whole earth, as *nothing and leſs than nothing*, he preſently infers, Lebanon *is not ſufficient to burn, nor all the Beaſts thereof for a burnt offering*, Iſaiah 40. 15, 16, 17. *Lebanon* abounded in all Spices for incenſe and perfumes, and in Cattle for Sacrifices and Burnt Offerings; but all the Spices and perfumes there, all the Beaſts and Cattle there, were below, and inſufficient for ſo incomparable a Being: he is ſo great that no ſervice can be great enough for him.

1. This

1. This incomparable God calls for *incomparable awe and reverence.* Excellency commandeth awe. *Should not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall upon you?* Job 13. 11. ſhould not the vaſtneſs of his perfections provoke you to awefulneſs in your converſations? *His name alone is excellent,* Pſal. 148. 13. The greater diſtance between any perſons, the greater reverence is expected. The Husband is the head of the Wife, therefore ſhe is commanded to *reverence her Husband,* 1 Cor. 7. *Eph.* 5. *ult.* There is a great civil diſtance between Maſters and Servants, therefore the command runs, *Servants be obedient to your Maſters with fear and trembling,* Eph. 6. 5. But now between God and us there is an infinite diſtance, and therefore there ought to be (if it were poſſible) infinite reverence, (he is ſo vaſtly above and beyond all others in excellency, that he alone deſerves the name of excellency) therefore his name is holy and reverend, *Pſal.* 111. 10. and he is to be greatly feared. The greateſt excellency calleth for the greateſt reverence. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praiſed, he is to be feared above all Gods,* Pſal. 96. 4. This uſe *David* makes

makes of Gods incomparableneſs, *Who in the Heavens can be compared to the Lord? who among the Sons of the mighty can be likened to the Lord?* What then? what followeth on this? *God is greatly to be feared in the aſſembly of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him,* Pſal. 89. 6, 7. Becauſe in our whole converſations we muſt walk with God, therefore we are commanded *to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long,* Prov. 23. 17. But becauſe in Ordinances we have more immediately and ſpecially to do with him (then we are ſaid *to appear before him,* Pſal. 42. 2.) therefore we are bound therein to be moſt aweful and reverential. Subjects ſhew moſt reverence in the preſence Chamber of their Soveraign. O with what awe and dread ſhould mortals appear in the preſence of him who *inhabiteth eternity*! ſhould duſt and aſhes draw nigh to the *mighty Poſſeſſor of heaven and earth*? Eccl. 5. 1, 2. *Keep thy foot when thou goeſt to the houſe of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the Sacrifice of Fools; be not raſh with thy mouth, let not thine heart be haſty to utter any thing before God* (but why all this care and caution?) *for God is in Heaven,*

Heaven, and thou art on Earth. His incomparable Majesty calleth for incomparable reverence: Majesty is dreadful. *He is cloathed with Majesty*, Ps. 39. 1. (All over Majesty) *therefore let all the earth stand in awe of him.* He is adorned, surrounded with Majesty, therefore we must be filled with the awe of him. *Isa.* 2. 10, 19, 20. *Fear and Majesty* are three times conjoyned. His incomparable power calls for incomparable reverence. Power is aweful; and the greater the power is, the greater awe is required, *Math.* 10. 28. *Fear not them that can kill the Body, and can do no more; but fear him who is able to cast Soul and Body into Hell.* As if Christ had said, I know you are of timerous spirits, and men of fearful tempers, ye are apt to tremble, and to be frighted at every thing; well I will direct you, how you may make this passion advantagious to you, *viz.* by turning the stream into its proper channel, by placing your fear on its proper object; I will tell you of one worthy of your fear, who deserveth to be feared, So *Luke* 12. 4, 5. *I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear,* (I will offer you an object meet for your fear) *Fear him, who after he hath killed, hath*

hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him. You are apt like Children to be frighted with Bug-bears, and to dread them that can onely raze the Skin, and pinch the Flesh, and at the most can but take from you a life that will fall of it self within a few dayes: well I'le advise you whom to stand in awe of, fear him that can kill you and damn you, that can send your bodies to the grave, and your souls to unquenchable flames; *yea, I say unto you, fear him.*

2. This incomparable God calls for *incomparable humility, and lowliness of Spirit from us.* The height of God must lay man low, and the matchless excellency of God make him base in his own eyes. When we behold our selves in the Glass of those that have little or nothing that is good or praiseworthy, or that have less than our selves, then we spread out our plumes, and are puft up with pride, and judge our selves comely creatures; but if we would behold our selves in the glass of the *Incomparable God, in whose sight the Heavens are unclean, in whose presence Angels vail their faces,* to whom ten thousand Suns are perfect darkness, and all the world less than nothing; how should we pluck in our plumes, and abhor

hor our ſelves for our pride. Man never comes to a right knowledge of himſelf, what a pitiful abominable wretch he is, till he comes to a right knowledge of God, what an excellent incomparable Majeſty he is. As when men ſtand high, and look downward on thoſe below them, that are meaner and viler than themſelves, their heads are *giddy*, and ſwim with conceitedneſs, they then are *ſome body* in their own opinions; but when they look upwards to the Great God, the Sun, the Soul, the ſubſtance of all worth and excellency, that Meagrum or high-mindedneſs is prevented. The beſt men upon a ſight of God, the incomparable God (though the more excellent he is, the more cauſe they have of joy, in having ſo rich a portion, yet) inſtead of loving, have loathed themſelves, and inſtead of admiring, have abhor'd themſelves. When *Iſaiah* ſaw the God of glory ſitting on his Throne, in his brightneſs and beauty, encircled with Millions of cœleſtial Courtiers, covering their faces, (as aſhamed of their drops in the preſence of the Ocean) and crying *Holy, Holy, Holy,* (as apprehending his purity beyond all their expreſſions, and his perfections exceeding

ceeding all their apprehensions) what thoughts had he of himself! O what a poor pitiful contemptible creature did he think himself? yea, what an uncomely, loathsome, abominable creature was he in his own eye? *Woe to me*, saith he, *I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the Lord of Hosts*, Isa. 6. 4, 5.

3. This incomparable God calls for *incomparable love*, the top, the cream of our affections. Good is the object of Love. *Amor est complacentia boni*, according to the Moralists; the greater therefore the good is, the greater love it requireth; and God being the greatest good, must have the greatest love. This is the great and first command, *Math.* 22. 37. this is (as I may say) the only command, *Deut.* 10. 12. this is all the commands in one, *Rom.* 13. 10. Love is the Decalogue contracted; and the Decalogue is love opened, and explained. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind*, Math. 22. 37. God being the greatest perfection, must have the greatest affection. The greatest love (for God is Love, 1 *Joh.* 4. 8.) calls for the greatest love. He deserves the greatest *extensively*, the

the heart, ſoul, mind, ſtrength; the greateſt *intenſively*, all the heart, all the ſoul, all the mind, all the ſtrength. Reader, thy love to him muſt be ſo great, that thy love to thy father, mother, wife, child, houſe, land, and life, muſt be *hatred* in compariſon of it, and in competition with it, *Luk.* 14. 26. The truth is, there is nothing worthy of our love like God; nay, there is nothing worthy of our love beſide God. All our Friends, and Relations, and Eſtates, and worldly Bleſſings, are nothing lovely, but as they are his creatures, his comforts, inſtruments for his glory, and as they have relation to him: Nay, Sabbaths, Sacraments, ſeaſons of grace, are no more lovely than as they are his inſtitutes, and means of communion with his Majeſty. *I love the habitation of thy houſe* (why? becauſe) *it is the place where thine honour dwelleth*, Pſal. 28. 8. Once more; grace it ſelf is not lovely, but as it's the image and conformity unto, the pleaſure and delight of, that which fitteth and maketh meet for the love, embraces, and fruition of this incomparable God. Deſire and Delight are the two acts of love, diſtinguiſhed only by the abſence or preſence of the object.

When the object beloved is absent, the soul acts towards it in desire: When the object is present, the soul acteth towards it in delight. The former is the motion, the latter the rest and repose of the soul. Now the Incomparable God must have incomparable desires, panting, Psal. 42. 2. longing, yea fainting, out of vehemency of desire, Psal. 119. 20, 40, 80. God must be desired above all, Psal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.* The Incomparable God must have incomparable delight. *I will go to the Altar of God my joy, of God my exceeding joy,* Psal. 43. 4. The soul must be ravished, extasied in the presence and enjoyment of God, *Cantic.* 2. 4.

4. The Incomparable God must have *incomparable trust.* The more able and faithful any person is, the more firmly we trust him. Now God is incomparable in power, he hath an *Almighty arm*; incomparable in faithfulness, he *cannot lie*, Tit. 1. 2. *It's impossible for him to lie*, Heb. 6. 18. Therefore God must have our surest love, and firmest faith, *Heb.* 6. 18. *Rom.* 4. 20. We must esteem his words as good as deeds; and rely on all he promiseth, as if it were already

already performed. We must not staggar or waver, but *draw nigh to him with full assurance of faith*, Heb. 10. 22. His bonds must be lookt upon (for they are as good) as ready money; and we must rejoyce in hope of the good things promised, as if we had them in hand, *Rom.* 5. 2, 3.

5. This incomparable God must have *incomparable obedience* in the whole course of our lives. The more vertuous, or gracious, or honourable, or excellent, the person is with whom we walk, the more we weigh our words, and ponder the paths of our feet, and watch over our selves. God is incomparable in purity, in jealousie, in Majesty, in excellency; therefore they who are ever under his eye, and in his presence, and who walk with him, must walk (not as they do when with ordinary persons, carelesly and negligently, but) *circumspectly*, accurately, exactly, to an hairs breadth, as on a ridge, ἀκριβῶς, Eph. 5. 15. His law must be kept (to a tittle, in every punctilio) as *the apple of the eye*, Prov. 7. 2. which is offended with the least mote of dust. And this obedience must be not only at some seasons, and in some actions, but always, and in all things. *As he*

who hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation, 1 Pet. 1. 15.

All our ſervice to this incomparable God muſt be incomparable. Little ſervice is unſuitable to a great God, 1 Chron. 29. 1, 2. *David* the King ſaid unto all the Congregation, *Solomon* my Son, whom alone God hath choſen, is yet young and tender, and the work (i. e. of building the temple) is great; for the Palace is not for man, but for the Lord God. Now I have prepared with all my might for the houſe of my God, *&c.*

Fifthly, If God be an incomparable God, it informeth us of his *infinite grace and condeſcention*, to take ſo much notice of, and do ſo much for man. The height of the Perſon that beſtoweth a favour, and the meanneſs and unworthineſs of the object on whom it is beſtowed, doth exceedingly advance and heighten the grace and goodneſs of him that doth it. O what grace is it then for the moſt high, the God of heaven, the God whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, to manifeſt ſuch reſpect to vile ſinful duſt and aſhes, yea, to them that are rebels and Traytors againſt his Majeſty, and thereby worthy of Hell. *David* admireth it, and is amazed at it, Pſal. 8. 1. *O Lord, our Lord, how excellent*

is thy name in all the earth! and thy glory is above the heavens. What followeth? *What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the ſon of man that thou viſiteſt him?* That God, the excellent God, the God famous in all the earth, the God glorious above the heavens, ſhould mind man, poor ſilly ſimple man, weak frail dying man, ſinful filthy polluted man, loſt wretched miſerable man, could not but affect the heart of *David* with admiration and aſtoniſhment. *What is man that thou art mindful of him?* He is altogether below thy thoughts, and unworthy to be a moment in thy mind: Or *the Son of man that thou viſiteſt him?* he doth not deſerve to be viſited by the beaſts of the earth, much leſs to be viſited by the Angels of Heaven, and leaſt of all by the God of heaven; He may well ſay as the Centurion, *Lord I am unworthy that thou ſhouldſt come under my roof, neither thought I my ſelf worthy to come unto thee*, Mat. 8. 8. *David wonders that God* ſhould mind man ſo much as to make the heavens, and thoſe glorious Lamps there, for his uſe and comfort: *When I conſider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the ſtars which thou haſt made; what is*

man that thou art mindful of him? But how much more cause had he to wonder, that the heaven of heavens, the God of heaven, the Sun of righteousness, the light of lights, should do so much, and be so much himself for the good and comfort of man?

God doth manifest much grace and condescention in taking such care of *mens bodies* and *outward concerns*. You would think it a great grace and condescention in a King, to take care night and day of a poor beggar, to see to it himself (and not to leave it to servants or any others) that he have food, and raiment, and liberty, and peace, and safety every day, that his bed be made well and easie for him every night, that when he is sick he have physick, & cordials, and tendance, and should constantly visit him himself in person, that in all his wants he be supplyed, in all his weaknesses supported, in all his dangers defended, and in all his distresses delivered; If this King should never stir from this beggar, but do all this in his own person; if he himself should spread his table, and provide his food, and be at the sole charge of his garments, and put them on, and make his bed, and stand by him all night while he slept,

to

to prevent any evil that might befall him, and go up and down with him all day to protect him, and counsel him, and relieve him, as occasion required, you would be amazed at the favour and kindness and condescention of this Prince. Believe it Reader (surely seeing is believing) *the King of Kings* and *Lord of Lords*, he whose name is *I am*, he to whom all the Kings and Princes and Potentates of the world, are dross and dirt and dung, the Incomparable God doth more than all this, very much more for thee every day and every night, and that in his own person: He sendeth thee all thy bread, and drink, and cloaths, and makes them refreshing to thee; he provides thy habitation, and lodging, and commandeth sleep for thee; He is with thee continually in all thy out-goings, incomings, to preserve thee alive, to enable thee to thy motions, to succeed thy lawful undertakings, to relieve thee in thy necessities, and to defend thee from all thine Adversaries. And is not this condescention worthy of all admiration? O what grace is it, that the incomparable God, who hath millions of glorious Angels waiting on him, and ten thousand

times ten thouſand, always miniſtring to him ſhould thus wait on, and watch over poor crawling worms, night and day for good, Act. 7. 2, Job. 7. 20. Pſal. 4. ult. Hoſea 2. 8. Gen. 32. 9, 10, 11. Pſal. 34. 3, 4, 5. Heb. 1. 3. Pſal. 145. 5, 7. *Job* wonders that God ſhould condeſcend to correct man for his faults. *What is man that thou doſt magnifie him, that thou ſetteſt thine heart upon him, that thou viſiteſt him every morning*? &c. Job. 7. 17, 18. How much then doth God condeſcend to be his conſtant guide and guard, to keep him night and day leaſt any hurt him? O the grace of this God! This incomparable God doth much more magnifie his grace and condeſcention in the cate he is pleas'd to take of mens precious ſouls: Herein he ſheweth the riches of his mercy, the *exceeding abundant riches of his grace*, Eph. 2. 5. and 7. Reader, is it not condeſcending grace in the higheſt degree, nay beyond all degrees, for this ſelf-ſufficient, abſolutely perfect, incomparable God, when the ſoul of man lay naked, ſtarving, reſtleſs, encompaſs'd with enemies, unpittied of all creatures, weltring in its blood, gaſping for breath, ready every moment to fetch

fetch its last, and to be siezed on by Divels drag'd to their Dungeon of darkness, there to fry in untollerable flames for ever; for him to look on man in this loathsom condition with an eye of favour and love, to cloath it with the *righteousness of a God*, to feed it with that flesh which is *meat indeed*, and with that blood which is *drink indeed*, to give it rest in his own bowels and bosome, to bind up its wounds, and raise it from the dead, and make it free from the slavery of Satan, and his bondage to sin, and death, and hell, and to adopt it for his own child, accept it as perfectly righteous, marry it to his onely begotten, *the heir of all things*, dwell in it by his own blessed Spirit, and carry it on eagles wings, and conduct it safe through the wilderness of the world, and in spight of all the Lyons and wolves and serpents and adders and Giants and *Anachims* and *Canaanites* that opposed it, to bring it to an heavenly *Canaan*, to fulness of joy, and rivers of pleasures, and crowns of life, and weights of glory, there to reign in and with his own incomparable Majesty for ages, generations, millions of ages, yea unto all eternity? Friend, friend, what is condescending grace

grace, if this be not? Alas the incomparable God had no obligation to man, he ſtood in no way need of man, he is uncapable of the leaſt good by man; he would have been as happy as he is at preſent, if the Race of mankind had been ruin'd and had periſhed: Beſides, he was infinitely disobliged by man, and had all the reaſon in the world to deſtroy him; and yet he is pleaſed to be as ſtudious of mans welfare, and as ſolicitous about it, as if it had been his own. *Abigail* wondred that *David* anoynted to a Kingdom ſhould take her to be his wife, ſhe ſcarce judged her ſelf worthy to waſh the feet of his ſervants, 1 *Sam.* 25. 41. Mayſt not thou wonder more that the incomparable God ſhould marry thee to himſelf, who art unworthy to be his ſervant? *David* admired that God ſhould do ſo much for him: haſt thou not cauſe to ſay as he did, *Lord, what am I, and what is my Fathers houſe, that thou haſt brought me up hitherto*, pardoned, inſtructed, renewed me, taken me into thy own Family! and yet, as if this were a ſmall thing in thy ſight, thou *ſpeakeſt of thy ſervants houſe for a great while to come*, thou art pleaſed to ſpeak of thy ſervant for

an

an everlasting kingdom of honour and pleasure, 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. And this condescending grace, or gracious condescention, is much the more admirable, if we consider the means by which this great work of mans recovery was effected. The incomparable God that is so great, so high, without all bounds, beyond all understanding, becomes a weak weary hungry contemptible man. Reader, here is amazing condescension: The *Lord of all* becomes a servant, the *Lord of glory* becomes of no reputation, the *bread of Life* is hungry, and the only *rest* is weary, and the *Prince of life* is put to death. This is that which Angels pry into with such astonishing pleasure, that God should become man, the Lawgiver be made under the Law, he that tempteth no man to evil, neither can be tempted to evil, should be violently tempted many days together by all the powers of darkness, the only blessing should be made a curse, that Liberty should be in bonds, and truth it self belied, and justice condemned, and heaven be layd in the belly of the earth. This is marvelous grace indeed, such as *passeth all knowledge*, Eph. 3. 18, 19. If all the glorious Cherubims

rubims and Seraphims, Angels and Archangels, had condescended to have been turned into Toads and Serpents, it had not been by the thousandth part so great a condescention, as for the incomparable God to become man: for, those Heavenly Spirits, and Toads and Serpents, do *convenire in aliquo tertio*, meet in the Genus of Creatures; there is but a finite difference between the former and the latter. But God and Man meet in no Third, in no Genus, between them there is an infinite distance. There never was, there never shall be, there never can be the like condescension.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

Labour for acquaintance with the Incomparable God: Motives to it. The knowledge of God is sanctifying, satisfying, saving.

SEcondly, This Doctrine may be useful by way of Counsel.

1. Study the *knowledge* of this God, who is so incomparable. We are all ambitious to be acquainted with persons that are eminent and excellent in place, or power, or parts, or piety, and judge it our interest, and an honour to us so to be. If we could hear of one as strong as *Sampson*, whom no cords could hold, who could slay hundreds with a Jaw-bone; or of one as old as *Methuselah*, who could tell us what was done in many Centuries of years; or of one as wise as *Solomon*, who could speak to the nature of all creatures, and answer the hardest Questions we could put to him; or of one as Holy as *Adam* in innocency, or the elect Angels, who never broke the law of their Maker, but were as pure and perfect as when they came immediately out of his hands: How should we throng, and thrust, and

and crowd to such men? what pains should we take? what cost should we be at to obtain the favour and honour of their acquaintance? Surely (we should think) we could never view them enough, or value them enough, or know enough of them, or discourse enough with them: But alas, what are such men (if we could find them in the world) to the blessed God? what motes, what drops, what poor pitiful Nothings? what is a strong *Sampson* to the *Almighty God*, but as straw, as chaff, as rotten wood, as all weakness? what is the Age of *Methuselah* to the duration of the eternal God (to whose Age Millions of years add not a moment) but as a minute, as nothing? *Psal.* 39. 5. What is the wisdom of *Solomon* to all *the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, which are in the only wise God, but a curious web of folly? *Coloss.* 2. 9. What is the holiness of an Angel to the holiness of God, but as a candle to the Sun, yea, as perfect night and darkness to the Noon-day? O therefore, how shouldst thou labour to know this God? how industrious shouldst thou be to be acquainted with him? When the Queen of *Sheba* had heard of the extraordinary know-

knowledge and abilities of *Solomon*, she came from the utmost parts of the earth to see his person, and to hear his wisdome. But *behold*, Reader, *a greater than* Solomon *is here*. *Solomon* was an Ideot, an Innocent, to this object, which I request thee to know. The *understanding of God is infinite*, Psal. 147. 5. *There is no searching of his understanding*, Isa. 40. 28. Indeed it is bottomless, and therefore can never be found out. His knowledge can never be known fully, no not by Angels themselves. Do men beat their brains, and consume their bodies, and waste their estates, and deny themselves the pleasures of the flesh (as many Heathen have done) for the knowledge of nature, of the heavenly bodies, and their motions, of the Sea and its ebbing and flowing, of the earth and the creatures thereon; when after all their search, they were still at a loss; and for all the knowledge they attained, they proved but learned Dunces? what wouldst thou then do for the knowledge of the God of nature, of the mighty possessor of Heaven and Earth, of him to whom all things are less than nothing, of him, the knowledge of whom will make thee wise to Salvation.

O Friend, this is the only knowledge worth seeking, worth getting, worth prizing, worth glorying in, *Jer.* 9. 23, 24. *Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, nor the rich man glory in his riches.* Worldly knowledge, strength, wealth, are not worth glorying in; what then is? The next verse tells you, *But let him that glorieth, glory in this* (in what?) *that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord*, &c. This is a jewel that a man may boast of, and glory in, *that he knoweth me, that I am the Lord.*

There is an excellency in all knowledge. Knowledge is the eye of the Soul, to direct it in its motions; it is the lamp, the light of the Soul set up by God himself to guide it in its actions. The understanding of man is the candle of the Lord, *Prov.* 20. 27. Without knowledge the Soul is but a Dungeon of darkness, and blackness, full of confusion and terror: But there is an incomparable excellency in the knowledge of this incomparable God. The object doth elevate and heighten the act. There is a vast difference between the knowledg of earthly things, and heavenly things; between the know-

knowledge of wiſe, ſtrong, faithful, merciful, juſt, holy men, and the only wiſe, omnipotent, unchangeable, righteous, moſt holy God. Only before I proceed to the urging this Uſe, I would deſire thee Reader to take notice, what knowledge of God it is which I am preſſing thee to labour for; it is not a meer notional ſpeculative knowledge (though a knowledge of apprehenſion is a duty, & neceſſary, *Eph.* 5. 17. *Pſal.* 143. 8. *Heb.* 8. 9, 10.) but an experimental knowledge: *Thou haſt made me to know wiſdom in my ſecret parts*, Pſal. 51. 6. (The heart is called the ſecret part, becauſe known only to God, 1 *Kings* 8. 39.) ſuch a knowledge as affecteth the heart (with love to him, and fear of him, and hatred of what is contrary to him; true knowledge takes the heart as well as takes the head, *Pſal.* 1. 6. 1 *Kings* 8. 38. *Phil.* 3. 10.) and influenceth the life, 1 *Joh.* 2. 4. *He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a lyar, and the truth is not in him.* Coloſſ. 1. 9, 10. *John* 10. 4, 5. Right knowledge, though it begin at the head, doth not end there, but falls down upon the heart to affect that, and floweth out in the life to order and regulate that,

Coloss. 1. 10. *We pray for you, that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding* (for what end, and to what purpose) *that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work.*

To enforce this Use, I shall give thee two or three Motives, and as many means.

To encourage thee to study the knowledge of this God, consider these three properties of it.

1. The true knowledge of this God will be a sanctifying knowledge. If thou hast any thing of a *man*, *I mean* of Reason in thee, holiness (which was thy primitive perfection, which is the Image of the incomparable God, and will fit thee for his special love and eternal embraces) will be a strong and cogent argument with thee. Now this knowledge of God will conform thee to God, render thee like unto him, who is the pattern and standard of all excellency. As I said before, knowledge is the eye by which we see God, and the vision of God causeth an assimulation to him. *But we all with open face beholding as in a Glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even*

as

as by the Spirit of our God, 2 Cor. 3. 18. The Blackamore that often look'd on beautiful pictures, brought forth a beautiful Son. We are often changed into the postures and fashions, yea and dispositions of those whom we much converse with on earth: surely then acquaintance with the gracious and Holy God, will make us in some measure to resemble him.

Other knowledge pollutes and defiles the soul: Oftentimes the more men pick the lock of Natures Cabinet, and look into her riches, and treasury, her secrets and mysteries; the more Atheistical they are, and forgetful of the God of Nature. Hence *Religio Medici* is irreligion; they see so much of the operations of nature, that they ascribe the principal efficiency to the instrument. And hence the *wisdom* of the Philosophers (counted the wisest men in the world) *is folly*, 1 Cor. 3. 19. And *though they professed themselves to be wise, yet they became fools*, and were guilty of all manner of wickedness, *Rom.* 1. 22. to the end. And what was the reason, but this, *they knew not God*, with all their knowledge, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. Ignorant heads are ever accompanied with irreligious hearts, and both

are attended with Atheiſtical lives, *Eph.* 4. 18. The Apoſtle tells us of the Heathen, that they were *eſtranged from the life of God* (an holy life) *through the ignorance that was in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts.* So *Hoſ.* 4. 1,2,3,4. But the knowledg of God *purifieth* the ſoul. As the *Sun* conveyeth heat along with its light, ſo *grace is multiplied through the knowledge of God*, 2 Pet. 1. 2. When *Moſes* had convers'd with God in the Mount, *his feet ſhone*, that the Jews could not behold him. When a Soul hath once acquainted himſelf with the bleſſed God, his life will ſhine with holineſs; therefore *David* counſelleth his Son *Solomon*, *to know the God of his Fathers, and to ſerve him with a perfect heart, and willing mind*; firſt, to know him; then to ſerve him, 1 *Chron.* 28. 9.

This knowledge muſt needs be a ſanctifying knowledge, becauſe it renders ſin abominable, the world contemptible, God honourable, and the ſoul the more humble.

The knowledge of God will render *ſin moſt abominable* to the Soul, it renders ſin to be exceeding ſinful. The miſeries that befall us in our eſtates, names, bodies, ſouls,

ſouls, nay, all the curſes of the Law, and torments of the damned, do not diſcover the ugly loathſome features and monſtrous deformed nature of ſin, like the knowledge of this incomparable God. *Job* confeſſeth his ſin, *Job* 42. 2. *I uttered things that I underſtood not*; nay, he *abhorreth himſelf* for his ſin, *v.* 5. But whence came he who ſometime juſtifyed himſelf too much, now to abhor himſelf? He gives us the reaſon or cauſe of it, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear*, (I had ſome knowledge of thee before) *but now mine eyes ſee thee* (I now have a clearer and fuller knowledge of thee) *wherefore I abhor my ſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.* The more we know the greateſt good, the more we ſhall hate the greateſt evil.

The knowledge of God will render *the world contemptible* to a Chriſtian. None undervalue the Creature, but thoſe who have had a ſight of the Creator; neither can any trample on the riches, honours, and pleaſures of this world, but thoſe who know him who is the riches, and honours, and pleaſures of the other world. They who never ſaw the *Sun*, wonder at a *Candle*: and they who never knew the bleſſed

God, wonder at, and are fond of poor low things, mean, ſmall, pitiful things on earth: But the whole world, with all its Crowns, and Scepters, and Diadems, and Delights, is but a dunghill to him that hath ſeen the incomparable God. *Moſes* could refuſe the honour of being the adopted Child of a Kings Heir, reject the pleaſures of *Pharaoh's* Court, and prefer the reproaches of Chriſt before all the Treaſures of *Egypt*, when he had once got a ſight of the Incomparable God, *Heb.* 11. 25, 26, 27. *For he ſaw him that was inviſible.*

The knowledge of God will render *God more honourable in our eſteems.* The more we know of many things and perſons, the more we ſleight and deſpiſe them. The more we know ſin, the more we loath it; the more we know our ſelves, the more we abhor our ſelves; but the more we know God, the more we love him, and the more we admire him. The reaſon of all the contempt and affronts which we offer to God, is our ignorance of him. *The whole world lyeth in wickedneſs*, as a beaſt in its dung, or vermine in their ſlime, 1 *Joh.* 5. 19. but the reaſon is what Chriſt ſpeaks, *Joh.* 17. 25. *Father the world hath not known thee;*

thee; for the Apoſtle ſaith, *had they known, they would never have Crucified the Lord of Glory*, 1 Cor. 2. 8. They who know God, cannot but ſee infinite reaſon why they ſhould love, and fear, and honour, and pleaſe him all their dayes. Why do you think is God ſo much wondred at, and worſhipped in his Church, more than in other parts of the world? Why doth he inhabit their higheſt praiſes, *Pſal.* 22. 3. and greateſt bleſſings and thankſgivings, but becauſe he is known more there than in other parts of the world. *In Judah is God known* (therefore) *his name is great* (his name alone is excellent) *in Iſrael*, *Pſal.* 76. 1.

The knowledge of God makes us *humble*. We never are ſo low in our own eyes, as when we ſee the moſt high God. The more we know of men that are more vain, and fooliſh, and wicked than our ſelves, the more we are exalted and puffed up; but the more we know of God, of the great God, the incomparable God, the moſt holy God, to whom we are as nothing, leſs than nothing, worſe than nothing; the more we abaſe our ſelves.

When *David* is acquainted with the excellency of God, *O Lord, my Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, and thy glory is above the Heavens!* Pſal. 8. 1. What low, little, diminutive thoughts, hath he of himſelf and others? *v.* 4. *What is man? or, what is the Son of man?* What a poor, pitiful, contemptible thing is man? What a vain, empty, inſignificant nothing is the Son of man? We are aſhamed of our ruſh Candles, or Glow-worms, & hide our heads in the preſence of the Sun. The holieſt man abhors himſelf for his unholineſs before the moſt Holy God. So *Job* 25. 2. *Dominion and fear are with him*, v. 3. *There is no number of his Armies*, v. 5. *Behold even to the Moon, and it ſhineth not, and the Stars are not pure in his ſight: How much leſs man that is a worm, and the Son of man that is a worm?* v. 6. A worm is the moſt deſpicable contemptible creature, every beaſt trampleth on it; ſuch a creature is man in his own apprehenſions, when he once underſtandeth the incomparable God.

When *Iſaiah* had ſeen the Lord of Hoſts, though he were an Holy man, he cryeth out, *I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips, for mine eyes have ſeen the Lord of Hoſts,*

Iſa.

Isa. 6. 3, 4. He never saw so much of his own uncleanness, as when he saw him in whose presence the Heavens are unclean. Other knowledge, like wind in a bladder, puffeth up, 1 *Cor.* 8. 2. but the knowledge of God, as fire nigh the bladder, shrinks and shrivels it up to nothing.

2. The knowledge of God is a *satisfying knowledge.* A man may know much of Creatures; and the more he knoweth, the more unquiet and restless he is; his knowledge, as *wind* to the stomack, may fill, and pain, and trouble him, but cannot satisfie him: for, Creatures are not that savory meat which the heaven-born spiritual immortal Soul of man would have, and must have, if ever it be contented. The greatest Students, who have wearied and tired out their brains, and bodies, in the search of Natures secrets, have found by experience, that they *spent their strength for what is not bread, and their labour for what will not satisfie*; and they have known the truth of the Wise mans saying, He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow, *Eccles.* 1. 18.

That knowledge which satisfieth, must be of an object that is suitable, in its spirituality,

tuality, to the nature of the Soul; in its all-sufficiency, to the manifold neceſſities of the Soul; and in its immortality, to the duration of the Soul; if either of theſe be wanting in it, the Soul cannot receive ſatisfaction by it, becauſe without all theſe the Soul cannot be perfectly happy; and till it find that which can make it perfectly happy, it will be reſtleſs. If it meet with an object that is ſuitable to its nature, yet if it be not anſwerable to all its wants, it will ſtill be complaining (wherein it is unſupplyed) and ſo unquiet? If it meet with an object that is ſuitable to its nature, and anſwerable to all its wants, yet if it be not eternal, it muſt needs be full of fears and troubles in the fore-thoughts of its amiſſion of ſo great a good, which would imbitter the preſent poſſeſſion of it; For the ſoul being incorruptible and immortal it ſelf, cannot but deſire that good which will run parallel with its own life; and if it deſire it, nothing will fully ſatisfie it, till it obtain ſuch a good. Now nothing in this world is ſuitable to the Souls nature (the Soul is ſpiritual, the things of this world are carnal) nor anſwerable to the various indigencies of the Soul (the Souls wants are many, and in a manner infinite;

finite; beſides, they are ſpiritual, as, pardon of Sin, peace with God, peace of Conſcience, &c. when the good things of this life are particular, finite, and bodily) nor equal to the Souls duration (the Soul will abide and continue after millions of ages and generations, for ever and ever; but this world paſſeth away, and all the good things thereof.) But this God, whom I am perſwading thee, Reader, to know and acquaint thy ſelf with, is in all theſe reſpects perfect, and ſo will ſatisfie thy ſoul. God is a *ſpiritual* good, a Spirit, *Joh.* 4.23. the Father of Spirits, and ſo ſuitable to the nature of thy ſoul. He is an *univerſal* good, all good, and ſo anſwerable to the many wants of thy Soul. He is an *eternal* good, a good that never dieth, never fadeth, a good that *only hath immortality*, and ſo is equal to thy ſouls duration; therefore the Diſciple cryeth out to Chriſt, *ſhew us the Father, and it ſufficeth*, Joh. 10. 8. and *David* tells us, that he is fully pleaſed in having God for his portion, *Pſal.* 14. 5,6.

Give any man both that which he would have, and that which he *ſhould* have, and he is contented. If indeed you give a man what he would have, ſuppoſing it be

be that which he *ſhould not* have, his deſires being depraved and vitiated, he cannot be contented when he hath what he deſired, becauſe luſts are unſatiable, and ſinful deſires never ſatisfied: (thence the Heathen Emperours had their Inventors of new pleaſures; and poſſibly that may be the meaning of that place, *Rom.* 1. 28. The Heathen wearied with common, invented, unnatural delights) But give a man what he would have, ſuppoſe it be what *he ſhould have* (his deſires being rectified) and he is then at eaſe and reſt.

He who knoweth God aright, is fully ſatisfied in him; when he once drinketh of the *Fountain of living waters*, he thirſteth no more after other objects, *Joh.* 4. 14. Though the Soul ſtil deſireth to know more of God, till it come to that place where it ſhall *know as it is known*, as *David*, though ſatisfied with his portion, *Pſal.* 16. 4, 5. yet thirſted after more of it, *Pſal.* 63. 1, 2. yet it is quiet and contented in God. And indeed the ſweetneſs which it taſteth in acquaintance with the incomparable God, makes it long after nearer and fuller acquaintance with him. When *Moſes* was once acquainted with God, he begs that he might

might see and know more of his glory; and the reason is, because while God is the object, there can be no satiety, he being the *God of all joy and consolation*; neither can there be such a full acquaintance as to cease desires after farther acquaintance, he being an object still too great for the faculties to comprehend. The desires of the glorified are without anxiety, because they are satisfied in the object of their desires; and their satisfaction or enjoyment is without satiety or loathing, because they see still infinite cause to desire him.

When the Soul once comes to know God (as the needle touch'd with the Loadstone, when it turns to the North) it is then quiet, though before, like the Dove, it hover'd up and down over the waters of this world, and could find no rest. This knowledge, if right, diffuseth into the Soul a sweet tranquillity, silent peace, secret setled calmness, besides a ravishing præ-vision, and blessed fore-fruition of its fuller acquaintance in the other life.

3. The knowledge of God is a *saving knowledge*. Many perish for all their great knowledge of Creatures; their knowledge may light them to the more dismal Chambers

bers of death, of blackneſs of darkneſs for ever, *Joh.*15.24. And indeed their knowledge (like many Pigs of Silver in a Veſſel ſinking) preſſeth them the deeper into Hell: but the knowledge of God is ſaving; God will know him in the other world, who knows him in this; He will be ſo far from knowing them hereafter who are ignorant of him here, that he will come *in flaming fire to render vengeance on them that know not God*, 2 Theſſ. 1. 7, 8. But he will own them, and take acquaintance with them then, that own him and are acquainted with him now, *Pſal.* 91. 14. *I will ſet him on high, becauſe he hath known my name.* God will ſet him as high as Heaven, who knoweth his name on earth. Reader, it's as much worth as Heaven to thee to know this incomparable God. *This is life eternal, to know thee the onely true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*, Joh. 17. 3. It is the *morning*, though not the Meridian of Heaven; it is the *Bud*, though not the ripe fruit of glory; it is the *ſeed*, though not the harveſt of the Inheritance above; to know the true God, and Jeſus Chriſt. This knowledge is of the *ſame nature*, though not of the ſame meaſure, with that

in

in the other world, *Eph.* 4. 13. Now the Chriſtian knoweth as a *Child*, then he ſhall know as a man; now he ſeeth God as it were at *a diſtance* through the proſpective glaſs of faith, but then he ſhall ſee God face to face; *Now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to face; now we know in part, but then we ſhall know as we are known*, 1 Cor. 13. 12.

CHAP. XXIV.

The Means of acquaintance with God. A ſenſe of our Ignorance. Attendance on the word. Fervent Prayer.

THe means which I ſhall offer, as helpful to the attainment of this knowledge of God, are theſe.

1. *Be ſenſible of thine ignorance of him.* A conceited Scholar is no good learner. He that thinks he knoweth enough already, will never be beholden to a Maſter to teach him more. *Seeſt thou a man wiſe in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him*, Prov. 26. 12. This was that which lock'd up the Phariſees in the dark dungeon

dungeon of Ignorance: they were blind; Truth it ſelf called them blind, *Mat.* 23. 16, 17. But they conceited their eyes were good, and ſo neglected the means of curing them. *Te ſay ye ſee* (I do not ſay ye ſee, but ye conceit ſo) *therefore your ſin remaineth*, Joh. 9. 40, 41. therefore your ignorance continueth. When Ignorance and Confidence (which are often Twins) go together, the condition of a man is helpleſs; partly, becauſe ſuch a perſon will not take that pains in reading, and praying, and conference, and meditation, without which the knowledge of God cannot be had, *Dan.* 12. 4. *Many ſhall run to and fro, and knowledge ſhall be encreaſed.* It's an alluſion to *Merchants that* run to this and that Port, to ſell out and take in commodities; or to a *Tradeſman*, that runs to this and that Mart or place to buy and ſell, whereby their ſtocks are increaſed. But a conceited man will never labour thus for that which he thinks he hath already. *If thou diggeſt as for ſilver, and ſearcheſt as for hid treaſure, then thou ſhalt underſtand the fear of the Lord, and attain the knowledg of God*, Prov. 2. 4, 5. Men count digging hard work, and will ſweat at it when they

they dig for ſilver: ſuch diligence muſt they uſe who will get the knowledge of God. But though poor men, who are ſenſible of their want of the knowledge of God, and of their woful condition thereby, will work to preſerve themſelves from periſhing; yet rich men, who think they can do well enough without it, will ſpare their pains, partly, becauſe all knowledge muſt be obtained from God by fervent prayer; and a conceited man will neither be inſtant with God for it, nor will God give it to him. God is the *God of knowledg*, 1 Sam. 2. 2. And from him all true ſaving knowledg cometh, *Prov.* 2. 6. *The Lord giveth wiſdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and underſtanding.* As none can ſee the Sun (by candle light) but by its own light; ſo none can know God ſavingly (by the light of nature) but by light derived from himſelf. Now a conceited perſon will not go to God for knowledge: What need I (thinks he) I have enough already. Poverty is a friend to prayer, *the poor uſeth intreaties*, Prov. 18. 23. But pride or conceitedneſs is an enemy to prayer, *The wicked through the Pride of his countenance will not ſeek after*

God, Pſal. 10. 4. Who will beg that of his neighbour, which he is confident he hath at home? Neither will God undertake the inſtruction of proud Scholars: *The humble he will teach, the meek he will guide in judgment*, Pſal. 25. 9. Such as are willing to be taught, will be thankful for their learning, and are fitted for guidance and direction; but conceited perſons are quite contrary. Therefore Reader beware of this miſt in which many miſcarry. *He that thinketh he knoweth any thing, knoweth nothing as he ought to know*, 1 Cor. 8. 2. But labour to get thine heart affected with thine ignorance, and the woful conſequents of it, *Pſal.* 95. 10, 11. This will be a good ſtep to knowledg. The Apoſtle gives thee the ſame direction, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *If any man ſeem to be wiſe, let him become a fool that he may be wiſe.* If thou ſeemeſt to be knowing, be ignorant (in thy own ſenſe and feeling and apprehenſion) that thou mayſt be knowing. Our Lord Jeſus gives the ſame counſel to the ſick and dying *Laodiceans*, Rev. 3. 17, 18. and acquaints her that her ignorance of her ignorance, and conceitedneſs of her knowledge, was the great hinderance of her recovery.

2. *Study*

2. *Study much the works, and especially the word of God.* The works of God are a Book wherein you may read of him, and by which you may hear of him. *The heavens declare his glory*, Psal. 19. 1. *The earth is full of his goodness*, Psal. 33. 5. As the shadow hath some proportion to the body to which it relates, so the works of God are some representation of the wise powerful gracious God, to whom they belong, *Rom.* 1. 19, 21. *The invisible things of God are seen by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.* Therefore consider the works of the Lord, and the operations of his hands.

The word of God is a *glass*, wherein thou mayest see his beauty and grace and glory, and so see him as to be transformed into his likeness, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. In the works of God you may see his steps, the prints of his feet, they are therefore called his *paths* and *his goings*, Psal. 77. 19. But in his word we may see his *face*, the comliness of his countenance, how lovely and amiable he is; therefore it is called a *glass*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. So that as the sight of a mans face helpeth and conduceth more to our knowledge of him, than the sight of

his steps; so the word of God is a far greater means of our acquaintance with him, than the Works of Creation and Providence. Therefore I say, study especially the word of God. The Scripture is the *key of knowledg*, Luk. 11. 52. and unlocks the mysteries which were kept hid from Ages and Generations, and opens the secrets of heaven to thy soul. It's therefore called *light*, *Psal.* 119. 105. and a *Lamp*, *Prov.* 6. 23. Because it discovers hidden things, helps thee to see what thou canst not without it, and directs thee in thy motions and actions. *David* had more knowledge than his *enemies*, (and they were subtil) than his *Teachers* (and they were no dwarfes in knowledge, such as *Gad* and *Nathan*) than the *Ancient* (and with *the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days is understanding*, Job 12. 12, 13.) and what was the means of it, *For thy testimonies are my meditation*, Psal. 119. 97, 98, 99. The Gospel is the *eye-salve* by which the blind come to see, *Psal.* 19. 7. The fragrancy and attractiveness of the incomparable God, increaseth up and down in the world as the Gospel is propagated. *Thanks be to God who maketh manifest the*

Savour

savour of his knowledge, (The knowledge of God, like a rich perfume, causeth and leaveth a fragrant odoriferous scent whereever it comes) *by us* (the ministers of the Gospel as the instruments hereof) *in every place*, 2 Cor. 2. 14. The ministry of the word is the Chariot of the Sun of Righteousness, whereby he conveyeth the light of the knowledge of God to the world. Therefore attend on Preaching, and give diligence to reading. *Search the Scriptures, for they are they that testifie of me*, Joh. 5. 39.

3. *Be frequent and fervent with God to give thee the knowledge of himself.* There is a twofold light requisite to bodily vision; a light in the eye, (A blind man cannot see at noon day) and a light in the air, (the best eye cannot see in the dark) So there is a twofold light requisite to the effectual sight of God, *viz.* The light of the word, and the light of the Spirit; the word cannot do it without the Spirit; and the Spirit will not do it without the word, where the word is afforded: both are needful. *There is a spirit in man* (a passive receptiveness, as a capable subject) *But the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding*, Job 32. 8.

All natural abilities, all acquired endowments, all the reading and learning, all the Teachers and Tutors in the world, cannot help one poor soul to the saving knowledge of God. It is God that *teacheth man knowledge*, Psal. 94. 10. He who made light in the first Creation, only can cause light in the new Creation, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. *But God who caused light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.* He that at first said, *Let there be light* (when darkness cover'd the face of the world) *and there was light*, a corporeal light, can command spiritual light, and the knowledge of his glory in the face of Christ, who is the express Image of his person. Therefore the Apostle betakes himself to God for the gift, *Praying that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ would give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him*, &c. 1 Eph. 17, 18. So *David* often, *Psal.* 119. 18, 34, 35, 125, 143, 144. *Rev.* 3. 18. Reader, art thou blind? take the Counsel of thy Saviour; Go to him *for eye salve that thou mayest see*; and be confident he that bids thee come to him for that, will bid thee

thee welcome when thou comeſt, *Rev.* 3. 18. *None knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him,* Math. 11. 27. Therefore, whoever thou art that ſitteſt in darkneſs. and in the ſhadow of death, go to the Sun for light, go to the *Sun of Righteouſneſs, in whom are all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge,* Col. 2. 9. for the light of the knowledge of God. Doſt thou not know the ſinfulneſs and miſery of a blind dark ſtate, that vengeance is the fruit of this ignorance, *Pſal.* 79. 6. that God will pour out his wrath upon them that know him not. Go therefore, as the blind man to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Cry, ſigh, mourn, pray, *Jeſus thou Son of* David *have mercy on me*; though he hear not preſently, hold on, continue inſtant in Prayer; though the Devil and fleſh rebuke thee (as the multitude him) yet hold on, call louder, *Jeſus thou Son of* David, *Have mercy on me, Lord, that I might receive my ſight.* And doubt not but he will have pity on thee, as he had on him, and touch thine eye, and give thee to ſee the things of thy peace; for thine encouragement thou haſt his promiſe, *Jer.* 24. 7. *I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord,* Mat. 21. to 37.

Jer. 31. 34. *They ſhall all know me from the leaſt to the greateſt:* So *James* 1. 6. *Hoſeah* 2. 20. *Heb.* 8. 8, 9. O with what hope may'ſt thou ſue theſe Bonds, and plead theſe promiſes, when he that made them is a God that *cannot lye* (1 Tit. 2.) and therefore cannot but perform them. Again, obſerve how kindly he took it of *Solomon*, (when he bid *Solomon* ask what he would) that he asked wiſdom, 2 *Chron.* 1. 10. *Give me wiſdom and knowledge, ſaith* Solomon: *And the thing which* Solomon *asked pleaſed the Lord*, 1 Kings 3. 10. And the Lord ſaid unto *Solomon*, *Becauſe this was in thine heart, becauſe thou haſt not asked riches, nor honour, nor the life of thine enemies, nor long life; Wiſdom, and knowledge is granted to thee, and I will give thee wealth and honour*, v. 11. When a poor creature, ſenſible of its blindneſs and darkneſs, lyeth at the feet of God, begging ſpiritual light and ſight, the heart of the Redeemer is taken with ſuch a requeſt, and ſubſcribes the petition with, *Wiſdom and Knowledge is granted to thee.* Be but diligent Reader in the uſe of theſe means, and thou mayeſt be confident of ſucceſs: *If thou cryeſt after knowledge, and lifteſt up thy voice for underſtanding; if thou ſeekeſt*

ſeekeſt her as Silver, and ſearcheſt for her as for hidden treaſure; then ſhalt thou underſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God: For the Lord giveth wiſdome, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and underſtanding, Prov. 2. 3, 4, 5, 6.

CHAP. XXV.

2. Ex. *To chooſe this incomparable God for our portion; with ſome Motives thereunto.*

2. IF this God be ſuch an incomparable God, then *chooſe this God for thy portion, and take him for thy happineſs.* Is it poſſible for thee to read ſo much of the incomparableneſs of God in his Being, Attributes, Works, and Word, and not deſire him? Thou canſt hardly ſee an excellent perſon, but thou art wiſhing him for thy Friend, thy Companion; nor an excellent Eſtate, but thou art wiſhing it were thine Inheritance, thy portion; and canſt thou hear of him who is *excellency* it ſelf originally, *Job* 13. 11. the ſpring and ſtandard of all excellency in others, whoſe name alone is excellent, *Pſal.* 14. 13. and not wiſh,

O that this incomparable God were my Friend, my Father, my Head, my Husband, my Lot, my Portion? Who will give me to drink of the water of the Well of Bethlehem? *O who will help me to drink of the well of Salvation, of the fountain of living waters, of the pure River that floweth from the throne of God, and the Lamb?* Canſt thou hear ſo much of his worth (though infinitely ſhort) and not deſire him? Is it poſſible for a rational creature to read of ſuch a bottomleſs treaſure, of ſuch boundleſs pleaſure, of ſuch an infinite unconceivable good, and not covet the enjoyment of it? O man, where are thy wits? whither art thou fallen? art thou a man or a beaſt? Ah didſt *thou know the gift of God, and what it is that is offered thee*, thou wouldſt ſcorn the higheſt honours, ſweeteſt carnal delights, greateſt riches, yea, trample upon all the Crowns and Kingdoms of this world for it. It's an ineffable priviledge that thou art a creature capable of ſo vaſt an happineſs, it's a ſpecial favour that thou haſt leave to aſpire after ſuch an immenſe inheritance; and when its tender'd to thee, wilt thou refuſe it? wilt thou neglect it? O wilt thou not give it all acceptation?

Having

Having ſpoken in another Treatiſe to this particular, I ſhall here only offer two or three things to thy ſerious thoughts, and proceed to a third exhortation.

1. Conſider, *what is offer'd thee*, when the incomparable God is offered thee for thy portion. And truly, to explain this head fully, would require the Pen, yea, exceed the skil of an Angel. None can tell what God is, but God himſelf. All the ſheets in the explication of the Doctrine ſpeak ſomwhat of him, but not the thouſand thouſandth part of that excellency that is in him. Reader, I may tell thee, when God is offered thee, the greateſt good that ever was, that ever will be, that ever can be, is offered thee; there never was, or can be, the like offer'd thee; more than Heaven and Earth, than both Worlds, than Millions of Worlds, is offered thee. This God who is offered thee, is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the God of Gods, the bleſſed and glorious Potentate, the firſt Cauſe, the original Being, Self-ſufficient, All-ſufficient, abſolutely perfect, uncapable of any addition or diminution. This God who is offer'd thee, is the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity every moment, to whom a thouſand years,

yea millions of Ages are but as one day, as one moment, whoſe duration is uncapable of the leaſt acceſſion, who is boundleſs in his being, omnipotent in his power, unſearchable in his wiſdom, unconceivable in his grace, and infinite in all his perfections. He dwelleth in that light that is inacceſſible; before him Angels, the higheſt of creatures, vail their faces; to him the whole Creation is leſs than nothing and vanity. This God who is offered thee made all things of nothing, ſupports all things, influenceth all things, and is all things, and infinitely more than all things. He is ſo needful a good, that thou art undone without him. This was the miſery of the Heathen on earth, *Eph.* 2. 12. and of the damned in Hell, *Math.* 25. 41. the very Hell of Hell. He is ſo plentiful a good that thou art perfectly happy in him, *Pſal.* 144. *ult.* thou needeſt no more. He is the Heaven of Heavens, *Pſal.* 16. *ult.* the ſafeſt refuge. O Friend, what doſt thou think of having this God for thy portion? Is it not worth the while to have this God for thy God? wilt thou not ſay, *Foraſmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great: Who would*

not

not fear thee, O King of Nations? Jer. 10. 6, 7. Again, the God who is offered thee, is the Well of Salvation, the Lord of life, the God of all conſolation, an Hive of ſweetneſs, a Paradice of pleaſure, an Heaven of joy. He is the richeſt grace, the deareſt love, the ſureſt friend, the higheſt honour, the vaſteſt treaſure, the exacteſt beauty, the chiefeſt good, and the fulleſt felicity. He is one that can enlarge and ſute all thy faculties, relieve and anſwer all thy neceſſities, fill up and ſatisfie all the capacities of thine Heaven-born ſoul. God is a good which Chriſt died to purchaſe for thee, *Eph.* 2. 13. 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. And ſurely if Chriſt thought him worth his blood, he is worthy thine acceptance. God is a comprehenſive univerſal good, not one, but all good, Riches, Honours, Pleaſures, Friends, Relations, Health, Life, Earth, Heaven, this World, the other World, all the good of both Worlds, and infinitely more; and art thou not covetous of ſuch wealth that is better worth than both worlds? *Philip.* 4. 19. *Pſal.* 23. 1. *Gen.* 17. 1. God is an everlaſting good, a good that will ſtand by thee, and abide with thee when all other good things ſhall fail thee, 1 *Tim.* 6. 7.

Pſal.

Pſal. 73. 25. He is that good which thou wouldſt have if thou art well in thy wits: he is that good which thou ſhouldſt have if thou anſwereſt the end of thy Creation; he is that good which thou muſt have, if thou art not eternally miſerable; He is the only ſuitable ſatisfying good, which hits the nature, and fits the deſire of the rational creature. O Reader, I ſay again, what doſt thou think of having this incomparable God for thy God? Surely by this time thy heart may well melt into aſtoniſhment, that he will allow thee to ſeek ſo matchleſs a portion. Well, what ſayeſt thou to him? Is it not worth the while to have him for thine, to whom thou wilt call in the day of diſtreſs, to whom thou wilt cry in a dying hour, when thy Soul ſtands quivering on thy lips, ready to take its flight into the unknown Regions of the other world, when Devils will be waiting to ſeize it, as ſoon as ever it leaves the body, to hale it to the unquenchable flames of hell, when thy Friends and Relations ſhall be weeping and wailing by thee, but unable to afford thy dying body the leaſt Cordial, or thy departing ſoul the leaſt Comfort. Ah friend, what wilt thou do in ſuch an hour,

hour, which is haſtening on thee, without the incomparable God? Believe it, though thou mayeſt live without him, thou canſt not dye (without an infinite horror) without him. Is it not worth the while to have him for thine, to whom thou muſt ſtand or fall for ever, from whoſe mouth thy ſentence of eternal abſolution or condemnation muſt come, and who ſhall judge thee to thine unchangeable ſtate of life or death? though thou mayeſt think thou canſt do well enough at this day with the world for thy portion; yet what wilt thou do at that day, when the world ſhall be in a flame, if God be not thy portion? Art thou willing or not, to have this God for thine? What ſayeſt thou? Canſt thou find in thine heart to deprive thy precious ſoul of ſuch an inеſtimable treaſure, and to leave it naked in the other world to the cruelty of Devils, and the dreadful curſes of the Law? Methinks, though I have ſpoken little, yet I have ſaid enough (to one that will but let his reaſon judge) to draw out thy moſt earneſt deſires after this incomparable God.

2. Conſider *upon what terms* thou mayſt have this God for thy God. You may poſ-

ſibly

ſibly think that ſo boundleſs a good muſt coſt you very dear, and the price muſt be vaſt of a pearl that is ſo matchleſs: but lo; to thy comfort, all the condition which God requireth of thee, is only to accept him heartily and thankfully in his Son. Canſt thou have any thing cheaper? wouldſt thou deſire him in his terms to fall lower? nay is it poſſible ſo to do, and make thee happy? Nor can he be thine unleſs thou receiveſt him for thine. It's a poor favour that is not worth acceptance. Do but take him for your happineſs, and you ſhall have him for your happineſs.

Thou giveſt more for thy bread, thy cloaths, thy houſe, for the needful comforts that are for the ſupport of thy frail body, than thou needeſt give for the great glorious incomprehenſible incomparable God. Thou payeſt money for them, but thou mayſt have him without money and without price. One would think that the equity of the condition ſhould both amaze thee and allure thee. Conſider, I ſay, God doth not require of thee things *impoſſible* to thee; he doth not ſay, if thou wilt remove Mountains, dry up Oceans, ſtop the courſe of Nature, create Worlds,

worlds, I will then be thine, as great as I am; He doth not ſay, if thou wilt ſatisfie my juſtice, anſwer the demands of my law, merit my love and favour, then I will be thy God; No, he himſelf hath done all this for thee by the death of his Son: All he deſireth is, that thou wouldſt accept him in his Son for thy God. Nay, he doth not require of thee any thing that is *barbarous or cruel*, as the heathen Deities did (by the Devil) of their worſhipers. He doth not ſay, if you will lance and mangle your bodies, as *Baals* Prieſts did; if ye will go bare-foot in Sackcloth long and tedious pilgrimages, as the Papiſts do; if ye will offer your children in the fire, and give the fruit of your bodies for the ſins of your ſouls, as ſome did, then I will be your God. Again, he doth not require of thee things that are *chargeable*, to offer the beſt and chief of thy flock daily in ſacrifice to him; nor as he once did of the young man, *to ſell all* that thou haſt, and give it to the poor; nor as Idolaters, to lay down ſuch a part of thy eſtate for thy pardon: but he only requires that thou wouldeſt take the Lord for thy God; and wilt thou not do it? Canſt thou deny him and thy poor ſoul ſo

reaſonable, ſo equitable a requeſt? As the ſervant ſaid to Naaman, *If the Prophet had commanded thee ſome great thing, wouldeſt not thou have done it? how much more then when he only ſaith, waſh, and be clean?* So ſay I to thee; If God had commanded the greateſt things imaginable, wouldeſt thou not to thy power have done them, that thou mightſt enjoy the bleſſed God for thy eternal portion? how much more then when he only ſaith, *Thou ſhalt have no other God before me?* O Reader, do but obſerve that firſt Command, which contains the ſum both of thy duty and felicity, and thou art made, thou art a bleſſed man for ever. Take the true God in Jeſus Chriſt for thy God, prize him as thy God, love him as thy God, Honour him as thy God, and obey him as thy God, and he will be thy God for ever. Do but as much for the true God, as the covetous man doth for his wealth, which is his God; as the intemperate man for his belly, which is his God; they give their higheſt eſteem, their choiceſt affections, and their greateſt ſervice to that which they take for their God. And ſurely, the true God is more worthy hereof, and will requite thee beſt for them.

3. Con-

3. Consider, *For what end* God offereth himself to thee. I would not have thee mistake, because God out of his infinite pity to his miserable creatures, is instant and urgent with them to accept of him; to think therefore that God hath any need of thee, or seeketh his own happiness therein; I tell thee, if thou hadst no more need of God than he hath of thee, thou mayst let him alone: No, it's purely for thy good, for thy real and eternal good that he offereth himself to thee: he needeth thy service no more than he doth the service of the damned, of the devils, and he knoweth how to make use of thee for his own glory, as he doth of them, if thou foolishly rejectest his offer of himself. *Thy righteousness will not help him*, Job 22. 2, 3. nor *thy wickedness hurt him*, Job 35. 2. He offereth himself to thee, not that he may be *blessed* by thee, but that he may be *bountiful* to thee. It's thy good, not his own, that he looks at; the felicity of accepting him is thine own, and the misery of neglecting him is thine own, *Prov.* 9. 12. Men call customers to them, press them with many arguments and intreaties to buy, that they may inrich them-

ſelves by their cuſtomers; but God calls men to buy of him, not to inrich himſelf, (He is as rich and perfect and happy as he can be) but to inrich themſelves, *I counſel thee* (ſaith Chriſt to his luke-warm Church) *to buy of me gold*, (why, that he may get ſomewhat by her, and enrich himſelf? No) *that thou mayſt be rich*; that thou (not I) mayſt be rich. Now Reader, ponder it ſeriouſly, it is wholly for thy own good, that thou mayſt eſcape wrath and death, and attain heaven and life, that God is pleaſed once more to offer himſelf to thee. What is thy mind about his offer? Wilt thou have him for thy portion, or no? Is there any thing unreaſonable in his deſire or demands? Doth not thy eternal felicity depend on thine acceptance of him? What ſayſt thou? Wilt thou have God for thy portion, or wilt thou have the Devil for thy portion? Thou ſhalt have an eternal portion, good or bad. The worldlings portion of good things is but for this world, and the godly mans portion of evil things is but for this world: Both have immortal ſouls, which will abide in the other world for ever; and their ſouls muſt have immortal portions to abide with

with them there for ever. Therefore, Reader, conſider what thou doeſt, either thou muſt take God in and through Chriſt for thy portion for ever, or hell and death and wrath and Devils for thy portion for ever: One of the two is the portion of all the ſons and daughters of *Adam*. If thou wilt ſtill prefer the world before God, and love the creature above God, and pleaſe thy fleſh more than God; when once thou appeareſt in the other world, God will rain on thee *fire and brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt, this will be the portion of thy cup*, Pſal. 11. 6. But if now thou acceptеſt him in his Son (for there is no making God thy friend, but by Chriſt) for thy chiefeſt good and happineſs, when all thy friends ſhall leave thee, and deareſt relations forſake thee, yea when *thy fleſh and thy heart ſhall fail thee, God will be the ſtrength of thine heart, and thy portion for ever.* O friend, conſider what I have ſaid in this Uſe, and the Lord give thee underſtanding, that thou mayſt know when thou art well offered, and be wiſe on this ſide the other world.

CHAP. XXVI.

3. Ex. *Give God the glory of his incomparable excellency: with some considerations to enforce it.*

IF God be such an incomparable God, *give him the glory and honour* of his incomparable excellencies: His incomparable perfections must have incomparable praises. *Praise him*, saith the Psalmist, *according to his excellent greatness*, Psal. 159. 2. But alas! what tongue, what understanding of men or Angels can do it, can praise him according to his excellent greatness? But though we cannot praise him according to the utmost of his excellencies, we must praise him according to the utmost of our abilities. The highest God, *Psal.* 92. 1. must have the highest praises. *Psal.* 149. 8. *The high praises of God are in their mouths.* The greatest God, *Psal.* 145. 3. must have our greatest praises. *Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.* Low or little praises are a dispraise to one so eminently, so infinitely high and great.

Ordinary commendations of an extraordinary

ordinary perſon are a diſcommendation to him. *According to thy name, ſo, O Lord, is thy praiſe to the end of the earth*, Pſal. 48. 10. Therefore his name *alone being excellent*, Pſal. 148. 13. his praiſe alone muſt be excellent. *David* tells God, *I will praiſe thee yet more and more*, Pſal. 71. 14. He had already praiſed him much, but he would endeavour to praiſe him more; and when he had done ſo, he would praiſe him more, and ſtill more. We read of ſongs of degrees, *Pſal.* 120, 121. We ſhould aſcend in our praiſes of God by an holy climax, till we come to the higheſt degree that is poſſible, and ſcrew up our faculties herein to the utmoſt pitch that they are capable of.

Praiſe him for the incomparableneſs of his *being*. That he is an independent, all-ſufficient, abſolutely perfect, incomprehenſible, omnipreſent, eternal, infinite being, ſhould much affect our hearts. *Praiſe ye the Lord, Praiſe him, O ye ſervants of the Lord, Praiſe the name of the Lord; Bleſſed from this time forth, and for ever: From the riſing of the Sun, to the going down of the ſame, the Lords name is to be praiſed: (* why *) the Lord is high above all* Nations, *and his glory*

The glory of Gods incomparable excellency above the Heavens; who is like to the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high? Pſal. 113. 1, to 6.

Praiſe him for his incomparableneſs in his *attributes*, for the incomparableneſs of his power. *O Lord God of Hoſt, who is a ſtrong Lord like unto thee?* Pſal. 89. 8. For the incomparableneſs of his holineſs, *Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holineſs?* Exod. 15. 11. For the incomparableneſs of his mercy, *Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity, and paſſing by the tranſgreſſions of the remnant of his heritage, becauſe he delighteth in mercy?*

Praiſe him for the incomparableneſs of his *Words*; *O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men*, Pſal. 107. 8. 15, 21, 31. Pſal. 72. 18. Pſal. 136. 4. Praiſe him for the work of Creation, *Pſal.* 114. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *Job* 38. 4, 5, 6. Praiſe him for his works of Providence, *Pſal.* 97. 8, 9. *Pſal.* 136. throughout, *Pſal.* 107. Praiſe him eſpecially for the work of Redemption, *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, who hath viſited and redeemed his people.* Luk. 1. 68. Pſal. 9. 1. Rev. 15. 3.

Praiſe

Praiſe him for the incomparableneſs of his *Word*, *Wonderful are thy Teſtimonies*, Pſal. 119. 129. How often doth the ſweet Singer of *Iſrael* praiſe God for them, as a ſingular kindneſs? *Pſal.* 147. two laſt verſes, *He gave his Statutes to* Moſes, *his Laws and Commandments to* Jacob: *He hath not dealt ſo with every Nation. Praiſe ye the Lord.*

Praiſe him by *admiring him.* Wonder at his *being*, As they of Chriſt, *What manner of man is this, that the winds and ſeas obey him?* Math. 8. 27. *What manner of God is this, who knoweth no bounds, no beginning, no ſucceſſion, no addition?* An amazing admiration of him, is an high commendation of him. And indeed our ſilent wondering at his perfections, is almoſt all the worſhip we can give him, *Pſal.* 65. 1. *Praiſe waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion*, Heb. *Praiſe is ſilent for thee, O God, in Sion*: not that praiſe was dumb or tongue-tyed in *Sion*; for praiſe in no part of the world ſpeaks higher or louder than in *Sion*; but to ſhew that when the people of God ſet themſelves to praiſe him, they are ſtruck with amazement and wonder, at his matchleſs being and beauty, at his infinite excellencies and perfections; and wanting words

to

to expreſs them, they ſit down in a ſilent admiration of them. Thou wouldſt wonder at *Adam*, if he were now alive, for his age; O wonder at him that is from everlaſting to everlaſting, that is the cauſe and original of all things, that is what he is, that is, and nothing elſe is; that is all he is in one indiviſible point of eternity.

Wonder at his *attributes*, admire his holineſs. *Behold he putteth no truſt in his Servants, he chargeth the Angels with folly*, Job 4. 18. Behold, wonder at it. Again, *Behold he putteth no truſt in his Saints, the Heavens are not clean in his ſight*, Job 15. 15. Admire his wiſdom, cry out with the Apoſtle, *O the depth of the wiſdom and knowledg of God*, Rom. 11. 33. Admire his love, *Behold what manner of love hath the Father loved us with*, 1 Joh. 3. 1. Admire his power, that he can do what he will do: *Who is a ſtrong Lord like unto thee?* Pſal. 89. 8.

Wonder at his *Works*. Thou art ready to wonder at the rare works of ſome curious Artiſt; alaſs, all their works are toyes to the works of the mighty Creator and Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth. *O Lord, how marvellous are thy works!* Pſal. 104. 24. *His work is honourable and glorious*, Pſal.

Pſal. 111. 3. and worthy thy greateſt wonder.

What a piece is the Creation! how marveilous! how myſterious! *Pſal.* 8. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *The Heavens declare his glory*, Pſal. 19. 1. and the earth is *full of his goodneſs*, Pſal. 104. 24. What a work is Providence? read *Pſal.* 104. and 107. How many rarities, curioſities, myſteries, are wrapt up in it, which are only ſeen in the other world? *Pſal.* 77. 19.

What man is this, ſay they, for he commandeth with authority, and the unclean Spirits come out of men? *Mark* 1. 27.

What a Maſter-piece, what rare workmanſhip indeed is Redemption? a work that the Angels are alwayes prying into, and wondering at, *Eph.* 3. 8. 1 *Pet.* 1. 10.

Wonder at his Word. When thou heareſt it, doſt thou not perceive a Majeſty and Authority awing thy Conſcience accompanying it? *And they were all amazed and aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine*, Luk. 4. 32. The very Officers who were ſent to apprehend Chriſt, could not but wonder at his words, and returned to them who ſet them a work, *Never man ſpake as he ſpake*, Joh. 7. 47. There are *great things* in the

Law

Law of God, *Hoſea* 8. 12. things that are *wonderful*, Pſal. 119. 18. which may well be wondered at; And all, ſaith the Evangeliſt, bare him witneſs, and *wondred at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth*, Luk. 4. 22.

Praiſe him by ſpeaking alwayes highly and honourably of him. If his name alone be excellent, take heed that thou doſt not take his excellent name *in vain*. Thy apprehenſions of him muſt be ever high, and thy expreſſions of him honourable. Thy Tongue is therefore call'd thy glory, becauſe therewith thou mayeſt glorifie thy God, *Pſal.* 57. 8.

Never ſpeak of God raſhly, or at random, without a ſerious conſideration of whom thou ſpeakeſt; and let thy expreſſions of him, and to him, be becoming his vaſt perfections, *Aſcribe greatneſs to our God*, Deut. 32. 3.

Speak honourably of his being, So *Moſes* Exod. 15. 11. *Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holineſs, fearful in praiſes?* So *Solomon*, 1 Kings 8. 23. *Lord God of* Iſrael, *there is no God like unto thee in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath.* So *David*, 1 Chron. 29. 11.

Speak

Speak honourably of his attributes, *Pſal.* 68. 34. of his power, mercy, truth, juſtice, wiſdom, and holineſs, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hoſts*, Iſa. 6. 3.

Speak honourably of his words, *Pſal.* 86. 8. *Among all the Gods, there is none like unto thee; neither are there any works like unto thy works*, Pſal. 145. 10.

Speak honourably of his Word. The Commandments of the Lord are pure, *Pſal.* 19. 7. Thy word is very pure: The Statutes of the Lord are right, *Pſal.* 19. 10. *The Law is holy, juſt, and good*, Rom. 7. 12. Though *Paul*'s corruption took occaſion by the Laws prohibitions, to become the more unruly (as the water at a Bridge roars the more for the ſtop) yet he dares not lay the leaſt fault upon the Law, but layeth all upon himſelf: *was the Law Sin? God forbid*, v. 7. Far be it from me to have the leaſt ſuch thought: No, the Law is holy, but I am carnal, ſold under ſin, *v.* 14. So when he ſpeaketh of the Goſpel, how honourably doth he ſpeak of it? ſomtimes he calls it the *glorious Goſpel*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. the *myſteries of the Goſpel*, Eph. 6. 19. the *word of Truth*, 1 Coloſſ. 5.

Praiſe

Praiſe him by *walking circumſpectly and cloſely with him.* Live alwayes as one that believeth, he hath at all times to do with this incomparable God; and is created and preſerved, and redeemed, to ſhew forth the praiſe of this God. When the Pſalmiſt had admired the incomparableneſs of this God in his being and doings, *Pſal.* 86. 8. he preſently ſubjoyns, *v.* 9. *All Nations whom thou haſt made, ſhall come and glorifie thy name, and worſhip before thee: For thou art great, and doſt wondrous things, thou art God alone.* O Friend, this incomparable God, muſt have incomparable obedience, *Be ſtill, and know that I am God,* Pſal. 46. 10. *Be ſtill,* be quiet, O ſinner, ceaſe, forbear any farther to offend me, and *know that I am God,* incomparable in knowledge, acquainted with all thy wayes and works, inward, outward, ſecret, private, publick; incomparable in holineſs, and perfectly hate all thy wickedneſs; incomparable in power, able to revenge my ſelf on thee every moment, to turn thee body and ſoul into hell; incomparable in juſtice, and will by *no means clear the guilty*; yet incompatable in mercy, and will accept and receive Prodigals, that, ſenſible

ſenſible of their folly and filthineſs, return home to me their Father, in the Son of my love. *Be ſtill*, ſinner, *Know* this, *that I am God*, and obey my Laws. But I have ſpoken more fully of this in the informations; only remember, that the praiſe of thy life, is the life of thy praiſe; becauſe hereby thou doſt in ſome meaſure repreſent the excellencies of this incomparable God viſible to the world, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. *Math.* 5. 18. Offering praiſe, and ordering the converſation aright, are joyned together by God himſelf, and let not us part them aſunder, *Pſal.* 50. laſt verſe but one.

To help thee a little, that thou mayſt give God the praiſe of his incomparable perfections, Conſider,

1. This God is *excellency it ſelf*: he is not only *excellent*, Pſal. 8. 1. and *alone excellent*, Pſal. 148. 13. but *excellency*, Job. 13. 11. *Should not his excellency make thee afraid?* nay, he is *greatneſs of excellency*, Exod. 15. 7. nothing but excellency, 1 *Joh.* 1. 6. Now think with thy ſelf what honour is due to one that is excellent, alone excellent, excellency it ſelf, and nothing but excellency. Can thy higheſt honour be high enough, or thy moſt excel-

lent

lent praiſes be excellent enough, for ſuch an excellency.

2. This God is the *ſtandard* of all excellency. Nothing is excellent but becauſe of its relation or likeneſs to him. Every thing is more or leſs excellent as it is more or leſs related or conformable to him. Saints are *the excellent of the earth*, Pſal. 16. 3. *more excellent than their neighbours*, Prov. 12. 26. but it is becauſe of his affection to them. *Since thou art precious in my ſight thou art honourable*, Iſa. 43. 4. and becauſe of their relation and likeneſs to him, Deut. 33. 29. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Pſal. 48. 2, 3. The Scriptures are the moſt excellent of books, none like them. *I have written unto thee excellent things*, Prov. 22. 20. But what's the reaſon? Surely becauſe they are the *word of God*, Eph. 3. 16. *his mind*, 2 Cor. 2. ult. *All Scripture is given by inſpiration of God.* 2 Tim. 3. 18. The Sabbath is the moſt excellent of days, the queen of days, the golden ſpot of the week, becauſe it is his day, ſet apart by him, and devoted to him: *My holy day, the holy of the Lord, honourable*, Iſa. 58. 13. Grace is excellent, the beauty and glory of the creature, *Prov.* 4. 7. 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. more excellent than gold

The excellency of Jacob whom he loved.

or

or fine gold, than rubies or pearls, *Prov.* 3. 14, 15. but why? becauſe it's his Image, it's a conformity to his nature, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. When the Holy Ghoſt would render any thing excellent, he mentions it with relation to God: *The Cedars of God, the City of God, the Trees of God, the Mountains of God,* &c. that is, the moſt excellent Cedars, Cities, Trees, and Mountains.

3. He is ſo excellent, that even *Angels vail their faces* in his preſence. The excellent Cherubims & Seraphims, who are ſpotleſs in their natures, and faultleſs in their lives, who are the higheſt and honourableſt, and ancienteſt Houſe of the Creation, who, as his ſpecial friends and favourites are allowed to wait on him continually, to behold him face to face, and to enjoy him fully and perfectly; yet theſe Angels vail their faces before him (as it were) aſhamed of their Star-light in the Preſence of the *Sun*, and their drops in the preſence of the *Ocean*, Iſa. 6. 1, 2, 3. *I ſaw the Lord ſitting on a Throne high and lifted up; about it ſtood the Seraphims, each had ſix wings, with twain he did fly, with twain he cover'd his feet, with twain he cover'd his face.* To

cover the face is a ſign or fruit of baſhfulneſs, as in *Rebekah*, Gen. 24. 65. The face of an Angel is void of all ſpots and wrinkles, it is full of beauty and brightneſs, a moſt excellent face. *And all the Councel looking ſtedfaſtly on him, beheld his face as if it had been the face of an Angel*, Acts 6. *ult.* yet this face, as excellent as it is, they cover (as it were) aſhamed of it before that God who alone is excellent.

4. He is ſo incomparably excellent, that *he humbleth himſelf to take notice of his perfect Spirits, his heavenly hoſt*, and their *perfect Service* in Heaven. It is not only great and infinite condeſcention with him to obſerve the higheſt perſons on earth, as Kings, and Princes; and the holieſt perſons on earth, as the moſt eminent Saints, and the higheſt and holieſt performances of theſe Saints; but it is boundleſs humiliation in him to look upon (with the leaſt reſpect) the perfect Spirits of juſt men, the Principalities and Powers that are in Heaven, and their pure perfect Worſhip and Service, *Pſal.* 113. 5, 6. *Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himſelf to behold the things that are in Heaven?*

5. He

5. He is so incomparably excellent, that he is *above the highest adoration and worship of his Creatures. Worship* is the most high and honourable of all our works. *Blessing and Praising* God is the most high and honourable act of worship; therefore this is that part of worship which suits the highest and honourablest state of the Creature in Heaven, and must continue for ever. As all our graces, of faith, and hope, and patience, *&c.* shall e're long be melted into love, and joy, and delight; so all our duties of Confession, Petition, Hearing and Reading the Word, receiving the Sacraments, shall all be melted into Praise and Thanksgiving, *Rev.* 7. 11, 12. *And the Angels and Elders that stood about the throne fell on their faces before the throne, and worshipped, saying,* Amen, *Blessing, and honour, and thanksgiving, be unto our God for ever*; and therefore *David* calls upon Angels, and the Heavenly Host, to praise God, *Psal.* 148. 2, 3. But this incomparably excellent God is above all this worship, this highest worship; though he be not above it, so as to *despise* it, *Psal.* 50. 15. and *ult.* yet he is above it, so as to *exceed* it; that his Saints and Angels, though their

powers are enlarged to the uttermoſt, though the ſtrings of their faculties are wound and ſcrewed up to the higheſt pitch and peg, to ſound forth his praiſe, even then they will fall infinitely ſhort of praiſing and bleſſing him, according to his deſerts, *Nehem.* 9. 5. *Bleſſed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe.* He doth not ſay, the name of God is exalted above the bleſſing and praiſe of men, of Saints on earth, in their imperfect ſtate; nor above the bleſſing and praiſe of Spirits of juſt men, in heaven made perfect; but above all bleſſing and praiſe, above the bleſſing and praiſe of Men, of Angels, of the holieſt Men, of the higheſt Angels, *above all bleſſing and praiſe* whatſoever, and of whomſoever.

6. He is ſo incomparably excellent, that his excellencies are beyond the *underſtanding and apprehenſion of Men and Angels.* The excellency of God is not only beyond all our expreſſions, verbal in our words, vital or real in our lives; but alſo beyond all our apprehenſions. A fluent tongue may ſpeak much of the excellency of God; an enlarged rational underſtanding can apprehend much more, (The mind of man

is

is much wider than his mouth) but the excellency of God is infinitely beyond all our apprehensions of him; His works are unsearchable, *Rom.* 11. 33. *Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on, and I perceive him not*, Job 9. 11. He goeth by me in his works, he passeth by me in the operations of his hands, and I perceive him not. There are such motions of God in the heavenly bodies, earthly plants, ordinary providences, the growth of a Child in the womb, *&c.* that men are nonplust at them, they are at a loss about the nature, reason, and mode, or gradual progressions of them. How much more is his *being* unsearchable, and his *essence* past finding out? If his *footsteps* are unconceivable and invisible, much more is his *face*; if his works cannot be apprehended, much less can his nature; because his works are in some respect finite, as they are terminated on limited beings, and they are also many of them visible, and so obvious to our senses; but his essence is wholly, and altogether, and in all respects infinite, and is no way visible or liable to apprehension by our senses, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. *Who dwelleth in that light that is inaccessible.* As no mortal eye

can behold the Sun in its full ſtrength (the attempt of which, according to ſome, hath ſtruck the adventurers blind) ſo no creature whatſoever can apprehend the incomparable God in his full beauty and brightneſs, in his boundleſs excellency and perfection. It's the voice of God to *Moſes*, *Thou canſt not ſee my face, for no man can ſee me, and live*, Exod. 33. 20. No man cloathed with a mortal body, or in this eſtate of imperfection, can behold an extraordinary created appearance of God; but he is thereat filled with fears and frights, *Job* 4. 12, 13, 14, 15. *Job* 21. 22. *Dan.* 10. 8. 16, 17. *Habbak.* 3. 16. No man, no, nor Angel, can behold God in his infinite eſſence, to the utmoſt of his perfections, but would be thereat crumbled into nothing.

Reader, if God be thus incomparably excellent, that he is excellency it ſelf, the ſtandard of all excellency, that Angels hide their heads as aſhamed of themſelves before him, that he condeſcendeth to ſhew the leaſt reſpect to his high and perfect Hoſt in Heaven, that he is infinitely above all their bleſſings and praiſes, all their conceptions, and apprehenſions; what praiſe, what honour,

honour, what glory ſhouldſt thou give to this God? Though thou art unable to give him all the glory that is due to his name, (yea, the thouſand thouſandth part thereof) yet do thou give him all the glory, thy mind, will, heart, affections, all thy faculties united together, and enlarged to the utmoſt, can poſſibly give him. Say to thy Soul, *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and all within me praiſe his holy name*, Pſal. 103. 1.

CHAP. XXVII.

Comfort to them that have the incomparable God for their portion,

THirdly, This Doctrine may be uſeful by way of *comfort* to all the people of God: If God be an incomparable God, then they are incomparably bleſſed who take him for their God, who have him for their happineſs. Every perſon or people is happy, or miſerable, as the God is whom they ſerve, as that is in which they place their felicity; for nothing can give out more happineſs to another, than it hath in it ſelf. That good muſt of neceſſity be

first in the cause, either eminently or formally, which is conveyed from it to the effect. Those who serve the flesh as their God and chief good, must needs be miserable, *Philip.* 3. 18. *Rom.* 16. 18. Because the flesh is a base and vile, *Psal.* 49. *ult.* a weak and impotent, *Isa.* 31. 3. a fraudulent and deceitful, *Jer.* 17. 9. a fading and transitory God, *Psal.* 73. 25. 1 *Cor.* 6. 23. So they who own, and prize, and love the world as their God and chief good (of such we read, the covetous man is call'd an Idolater, and covetousness Idolatry, *Eph.* 5. 5.) are miserable, because their God is vain and empty, *Eccles.* 1. 2, 3. piercing and vexatious, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9, 10. uncertain and unsatisfying, *Eccles.* 5. 10. 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. frail, and not lasting, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29, 30. *Prov.* 23. 5. Thus they who have Idols for their Gods are miserable, because their Gods are poor pitiful, blind, deaf, and impotent Deities; *They have eyes, and see not* the wants of their worshippers; *They have ears, and hear not* the supplications of their suppliants; *They have hands, and work not* for the relief of their Servants necessities, or their deliverance out of their distresses: and thence the Prophet infers, the

misery

misery of their makers and adorers; *All that make them are like unto them*, blind and deaf and impotent as they are, (falshood, & a lie, and vanity, and nothing, as they are, 1 *Cor.* 8. 4. 1 *Sam.* 12. 24.) *and so is every one that trusteth in them*, Psal. 115. 5. to 9. But the person who through Christ hath an interest in this great God the Almighty, all-wise all-sufficient God, is happy. *Happy is the people whose God is the Lord.* Psal. 144. ult. And incomparably happy, because that God who is his portion and happiness is an incomparable God. Therefore as the Scripture mentions God to be incomparable in excellency, it also mentions his people to be incomparable in felicity, and infers their incomparableness from his incomparableness who is their God.

The holy Ghost tells us, *None is like God*, he hath no equal in worth and perfection. *Who is a God like unto thee?* Exod. 15. 11. *Among all the Gods there is none like to thee*, Psal. 86. 6. And the holy Ghost tells us also, that no people is like the people of God, and that because God is theirs. *Happy art thou O Israel, who is like unto thee?* (why whence comes their incomparable happiness? truly from the incomparable God,)

saved

saved by the Lord, who is the shield of thine help, and the sword of thine excellency. Again, *What Nation is so great which hath God so nigh unto them,* Deut. 4. 7. *Israel* at this time, to flesh and sense, seemed a most unhappy people, they were in a barren and howling wilderness, without an house to hide their heads in; without food, but what a miracle sent them in; without raiment, but what was on their backs; without any dealings or converse with other people, nay, in the midst of cruel and potent enemies, they must fight their way to *Canaan* against walled Towns, and sturdy Giants; and yet even in this plight they are the happiest people under the cope of heaven; Because the God of heaven, the incomparable God, was nigh to them. *David* asserts Gods incomparable Majesty, and thence *Israels* incomparable felicity, 2 *Sam.* 7. 22, 23. *Wherefore thou art great, O Lord, there is none like thee,* (what followeth thence?) *And what Nation at this day is like unto thy people, even like Israel?* Reader, if thou art once effectually called, if thou art a regenerated sanctified person, know to thy comfort, and rejoyce therein, that this incomparable God is thine. 2. That all his incom-

incomparable excellencies are thine. 3. That this incomparable God, with all his incomparable perfections, will be thine for ever.

1. This incomparable God *is thine.* That God who hath no superiour, no equal, no fellow, is thine. He that *is, and there is none else*, Isa. 46. 9. *is thine.* He that is that he is, *Exod.* 3. 14. is thine: Thou hast a propriety in him, and a title to him. This is the *great priviledge* of heavens favourites. *Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he will be their God*, Revel. 21. 3. This is the *great promise*, the sum, the substance of all the promises, *I will be their God, and they shall be my people*, Jer. 31. 33. This is the *great prayer* of all that know how to pray, or what to pray for, *Psal.* 80. 12. *Psal.* 4. 6. *Exod.* 33. 15. *Jer.* 14. 8. This is the *great purchase of* the Son of God, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. His name is therefore Immanuel, *God with us.*

This is *heaven it self*, the very heaven of heavens; for it is not the place, but his presence which makes heaven to be heaven. *In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore*, Psal.

Pſal. 16. ult. Once more; this is the higheſt, the chiefeſt, the greateſt gift, which the infinite God can give to thee. When he giveth thee riches and honours and friends and relations, he can give thee greater things; when he giveth thee Sacraments and Sabbaths and ſeaſons of grace, he can give thee greater things; when he giveth thee pardon of ſin, peace of conſcience, the graces of his Spirit, he giveth thee great things, but yet he can give thee greater; but when he giveth thee himſelf, he giveth thee the greateſt gift that himſelf (though infinite in bounty) can give. O how ſweet is that term of propriety, *My God, My God.* The Redeemer himſelf rowl'd in his mouth over and over, as if he could never ſuck out the ſweetneſs in it, *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the houſe of my God, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the City of my God, which is the new Jeruſalem, which cometh down from my God,* Rev. 3. 12. David dwels on it as one unwilling to leave it, *Pſal.* 18. 1, 2.

Reader, O what cauſe haſt thou to triumph in thy happineſs, that the infinite God is thine. *Fear not, I am* thine, *Iſa.* 41.

Scepters,

Scepters, and kingdoms, and honours, and poſſeſſions, and friends, and relations, and liberty, and peace, and health, and ſtrength, are not thine poſſibly, but God is thine; He that is all theſe, and more than theſe, is thine; He is thine own God: even (mark) *our own God ſhall bleſs us*, Pſal. 67. 6. Thou canſt not call any thing outward thy own; thy eſtate is not thine own, *I will take away my corn, and my wine, and my oyl*, Hoſ. 2. 9. Hag. 2. 8. Thy relations are not thine own, *Ezek.* 16. 20, 21. *My children which thou haſt born to me.* Thy credit is not thine own, no, thy very graces are not thine own, *Cantic.* 4. 16. Nay thou thy ſelf art not thy own, 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. Ye are *not your own.* Thy body is not thine own, 1 *Cor.* 6. 16. nor your ſouls, *Ezek.* 18. 3, 4. *All ſouls are mine.* But God is thy own God, thy own glory, thy own exceeding joy, *Pſal.* 43. 4.

2. All the *incomparable excellencies of this God, his incomparable word and works are thine.* As all he is, is thine; ſo all he hath is thine, all he can be is thine, all he hath done is thine, all he can do is thine, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *All is thine:* All his incomparable attributes are thine: His incomparable *power* is thine to protect thee, *Gen.* 15. 1, 2.

Exod.

Exod. 15. 9, 10, 11, 12. His incomparable *wisdom* is thine to direct thee, *Psal.* 73. 23. His incomparable *mercy* is thine to pity and relieve thee in thy miseries, *Judg.* 10. 16. His incomparable *grace* is thine to pardon all thine iniquities, *Micah* 7. 18. *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. His incomparable *love* is thine to refresh and delight thy soul, *Psal.* 21. 5, 6. His incomparable *justice* is thine to accept thee as righteous for the sake of his Son, *Rom.* 3. 24. His incomparable *faithfulness* is thine to fulfill all the gracious promises which he hath made to thee, *Psal.* 89. 33, 34. His incomparable Majesty and beauty and glory are thine, to make thee great, and render thee comely and glorious for ever. *Ezek.* 16. 14. *Isa.* 43. 4. His incomparable *joys* and *pleasures* are thine to feed on, and be filled with, *Psal.* 36. 8. *Mat.* 25. 21. His incomparable *works* are thine. His works of Creation, *Psal.* 37. 11. *Mat.* 5. 4. His works of Providence, *Rom.* 8. 28. For your sakes I have sent to *Babylon*, Isa. 43. 14. and *Isa.* 43. 4. His work of Redemption is yours, *Joh.* 10. 15. *Gal.* 2. 20. *Rev.* 1. 5, 6. His incomparable word is thine, indited for thee, sanctified to thee, making thee wise to salvation. It's therefore called

their

their word, the word of their teſtimony, *Rev.* 12. 11. *Whatſoever things were written were written for our inſtruction, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*, Rom. 15. 4.

3. This incomparable God, and all his incomparable excellencies, will be thine *for ever*. His incomparable eternity will be thine; and ſo long as he is God, he will be thy God. When the ſenſualiſts God is gone, thy God will remain: when the worldlings God fails him, thy God will not forſake thee: when all thine honours, riches, friends, relations leave thee, thy God will abide with thee. *This God is our God for ever and ever*, Pſal. 48. 14. Not for a day, or week, or month, or year, or Age, *but for ever and ever*; Not for a thouſand years, or a thouſand generations, or millions of millions of generations, but *for ever and ever*; Not for as many millions of ages, as there are ſtars in heaven, drops in the Sea, creatures great and ſmall in both worlds, but *for ever*. O happy Conjunction of Propriety with eternity, *this God is our God for ever and ever*. Thine immortal ſoul hath an immortal God, an immortal good; *Thou ſhalt ever be with this incomparable Lord*. Comfort thy

thy ſoul in the midſt of all the perſecutions and afflictions that befall thee in this world, with theſe words, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 16, 17, 18. *For the Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven with a ſhout, with the voice of the Arch-angel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt. Then we which are alive and remain, ſhall be caught up together with him in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with theſe words.*

FINIS.